

# The Algerian War in French-Language Comics



*Postcolonial Memory, History, and Subjectivity*

Jennifer Howell

# The Algerian War in French-Language Comics

# After the Empire: The Francophone World and Postcolonial France

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LEXINGTON BOOKS

*Lanham • Boulder • New York • London*

Howell, Jennifer. "The Practice of Multimodal Storytelling: Camus's "L'hôte" as Bande Dessinée." *The French Review* 87.1 (2013): 153–67.

Howell, Jennifer. "A Father's Pain, a Daughter's Story: Transcending the Trauma of Loss." *The Unspeakable: Representations of Trauma in Francophone Literature and Art*. Névine El Nossery and Amy Hubbell, ed. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013. 285–304.

Howell, Jennifer. "In Defiance of Genre: The Language of Patrick Modiano's Dora Bruder Project." *Journal of European Studies* 40.1 (2010): 59–72.

Howell, Jennifer. "Reconstituting Cultural Memory through Image and Text in Leïla Sebbar's *Le Chinois vert d'Afrique*." *French Cultural Studies* 19.1 (2008): 57–70.

Published by Lexington Books  
 An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.  
 4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706  
[www.rowman.com](http://www.rowman.com)

Unit A, Whitacre Mews, 26-34 Stannary Street, London SE11 4AB

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

**Library of Congress Control Number: 2015949523**  
 ISBN: 978-1-4985-1606-8 (cloth : alk. paper)  
 eISBN: 978-1-4985-1607-5

♾️™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

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## Acknowledgments

I wish to thank my former colleagues at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and my current colleagues at Illinois State University for supporting my research. I am especially grateful for my former and current department chairs, Leslee Poulton and Bruce Burningham, as well as to my French Section colleagues at ISU, Laura Edwards, and Erin Ponnou-Delaffon. A special thank you to UW-L for awarding me a Faculty Research Grant and an International Travel Grant, which funded my research at the *Archives d'Outre Mer* in Aix-en-Provence, and to ISU for its generous New Faculty Initiative Grant, which helped defray publication costs.

In addition to the committees that granted me these funds, I also wish to thank colleagues who have read drafts and/or chapters of my manuscript throughout the writing process: Anny Dominique Curtius, Jonathan Druker, Névine El Nossery, Eric Gidal, Amy Hubbell, Michel Laronde, Mark McKinney, Rosemarie Scullion, Jennifer Sessions. I extend a heartfelt thank you to the anonymous readers involved in reviewing my manuscript. I greatly appreciate your insightful comments and suggestions. Most importantly, I want to thank Jodi Vandenberg-Daves who undertook the challenging task of editing my manuscript, reading it carefully and critically, and engaging thoroughly with both content and form.

Several sections of this manuscript have been presented at conferences: “De la valeur littéraire de l’instance préfacielle dans les littératures française et d’expression française” (University of Tunis, 2014), the International French-Language Comics Conference (Miami University of Ohio, 2012), the MMLA (St. Louis, 2011 and Minneapolis, 2008), the Interdisciplinary Conference in the Humanities (University of West Georgia, 2010), and the Image and Imagery Conference on Literature and the Arts (Brock University, 2008). I appreciate everyone who provided helpful feedback in the form of constructive criticism or well-articulated questions. I especially wish to thank those who organized these events.

I am incredibly grateful to Lexington Books, Lindsey Porambo, Associate Acquisitions Editor for Literary Studies, Cultural Studies, and Music, and her Assistant Editor, Marilyn Ehm, for publishing my manuscript. I have enjoyed working with them on account of their professionalism and transparency. It has been a pleasure.

Thank you to Catherine Ternaux at the CIBDI in Angoulême who was extremely helpful during my short stay there in 2009 and to Philippe Ostermann, Dargaud’s Deputy CEO, who took time to answer my questions about the French comic book industry while I was still a doctoral candidate. I would have never found my *fil conducteur* without the help of Étienne Augris, his students at Claude Gellée high school in Épinal (France), Stéphanie Carrier at the *Lycée français* in Tunis, and their history blog. I also wish to thank my entire cohort from the 2014 NEH Summer Institute: “Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia: Literature, the Arts, and Cinema since Independence.” Our discussions helped me to better articulate the critical analyses presented throughout this volume.

This project would not have been possible without the help of cartoonists and comic book publishers. I am forever grateful to Clément Baloup, Farid Boudjellal, Jacques Ferrandez, Kamel Khelif, Morvandiau, and Fred Neidhardt for allowing me to incorporate their illustrations into my manuscript as well as Ofelia Bénard, Christine Riva, and Emma Wilson at Mediatoon; Sylvain Coissard at Futuropolis; Henri and Michel Deligne at Éditions Michel Deligne; Hélène Gedouin at Hachette Livre; Christel Masson at Casterman; and Laurence Santantonios at Éditions du Mauconduit for granting me permission to reprint illustrations from their catalogs.

I also want to acknowledge the editors and journals who authorized the use of previously published versions of select parts of this manuscript: Konstantinos Pelsis at Cambridge Scholars Publishing, the *French Review*, the *Journal of European Studies*, and *French Cultural Studies*.

Finally, this project would have never come to fruition without the love, support, and greatly tested patience of my family and friends. I have the deepest respect and appreciation for Dany and Daniel Bacquey, Fatima and Asmae Benboujemaa, and the Howells. Merci surtout à Yannick pour son soutien moral, sa patience et



son amour sans lesquels ce projet ne se serait certainement jamais concrétisé; sans oublier Darwin, Bijou et Moo dont les câlins et les ronronnements m'ont aidé à garder mon calme.

## List of Abbreviations

ALN	<i>Armée de Libération Nationale</i> [National Liberation Army, the armed wing of the FLN]
CGT	<i>Confédération Générale du Travail</i> [General Confederation of Labor]
CIBDI	<i>Cité Internationale de la Bande Dessinée et de l'Image</i> [International Center for Comics and the Image]
CRS	<i>Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité</i> [Republican Security Companies, France's riot police]
ENAL	<i>Entreprise Nationale Algérienne du Livre</i> [Algerian National Book Agency]
FLN	<i>Front de Libération Nationale</i> [National Liberation Front, the main revolutionary body in favor of Algerian independence, now a major political party in Algeria]
FMA	<i>Français Musulman d'Algérie</i> [French Muslim from Algeria]
FN	<i>Front National</i> [National Front, right-wing political party in France]
GPRA	<i>Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne</i> [Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, Algeria's first government; it was formed in 1958 in Cairo and represented the FLN politically and diplomatically to other nations]
INALCO	<i>Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales</i> [Institute of Oriental Civilizations and Languages]
LICRA	<i>Ligue Internationale contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme</i> [International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism]
MNA	<i>Mouvement National Algérien</i> [Algerian National Movement, Algerian independence movement politically opposed to the FLN]
OAS	<i>Organisation Armée Secrète</i> sometimes referred to as <i>Organisation de l'Armée Secrète</i> [Secret Armed Organization or Organization of the Secret Army, a clandestine French political and military organization created in February 1961 to defend France's continued presence in Algeria]
PCF	<i>Parti Communiste Français</i> [French Communist Party]
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SAS	<i>Sections Administratives Spécialisées</i> [Specialized Administrative Sections, administrative units created in 1955 to pacify specific Algerian regions and to promote French Algeria to rural Muslim populations via social, medical, and educational assistance programs]
SNED	<i>Société Nationale d'Édition et de Diffusion</i> [National Publishing and Broadcasting Company (Algeria)]

## Chronology of the Algerian War

May 8, 1945	Algerian Muslims demonstrate in favor of independence in Setif, Guelma, and Kherrata. The French army neutralizes the demonstration by killing thousands.
November 1, 1954	The National Liberation Front (FLN) launches a series of bombings across Algeria, marking the start of the Algerian War.
August 1955	The FLN targets Algerians civilians of European descent (also known as Pieds-Noirs) in Philippeville. French troops retaliate, killing thousands of Muslim Algerians.
January–September 1957	General Jacques Massu directs a counterinsurgency against FLN urban guerrilla warfare, known as the Battle of Algiers. French security forces generalize their use of torture, forced disappearances, and summary executions.
May 1958	Military coup led by Generals Raoul Salan, Edmond Jouhaud, Jean Gracieux, and Jacques Massu; the settler population and the French army demand de Gaulle's return to power after a twelve-year hiatus. The French National Assembly approves.
June 1, 1958	De Gaulle becomes Prime Minister of the Fourth Republic.
June 4, 1958	De Gaulle pronounces his infamous "je vous ai compris" [I have understood you] speech in Algiers when he announced that a new constitution would be drafted. The leading line of this speech, "je vous ai compris," was hotly debated. Pieds-Noirs thought that he was speaking in favor of French Algeria, that he had understood the demands of the Pied-Noir community. In reality, he was acknowledging that all individuals, including colonized Algerians, have civil and political rights.
September 28, 1958– January 9, 1959	De Gaulle's constitution is approved by a general referendum and signed into law. France transitions from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic. Charles de Gaulle is elected president on December 21, 1958 and comes into office on January 9, 1959.
September 16, 1959	Convinced of France's untenable position in Algeria, de Gaulle declares during a televised speech that he is now in favor of Algerian "self-determination," meaning that all Algerians would decide the future of Algeria.
January 24–February 1, 1960	<i>Semaine des barricades</i> [week of barricades] in Algiers. Members of the settler population erect barricades blocking major streets of Algiers in response to de Gaulle's call for self-determination.
January 8, 1961	De Gaulle organizes a referendum on self-determination with respect to Algerian independence.
April 21–26, 1961	Generals Maurice Challe, Edmond Jouhaud, André Zeller, and Raoul Salan organize a generals' putsch. Their objective is to overthrow President de Gaulle and establish a military junta in French Algeria. The attempt results in failure.
October 17, 1961	Under orders issued by Police Chief Maurice Papon, the French police fire on a peaceful pro-FLN demonstration in Paris. Hundreds of protestors are killed, deported, or declared missing.
February 8, 1962	The French police repress a peaceful demonstration against the Secret Armed Organization (OAS) at the Charonne metro station in Paris. Nine are killed.
March 18–19, 1962	France and the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA) sign the Evian Accords ending the Algerian War and declaring a formal ceasefire to begin on March 19, 1962. The Pied-Noir exodus begins; OAS violence escalates.
March 26, 1962	The French army fires on civilians protesting in favor of French Algeria on Rue d'Isly in Algiers. The majority were Pieds-Noirs. The massacre results in the death of nearly fifty people. Over one hundred are injured.
July 5, 1962	Algerian independence is declared.



## Introduction

### *The Algerian War and French Comics*

On November 1, 1954, France's last war of decolonization erupted in Algeria, resulting in the death of at least 18,000 French soldiers and 350,000 Algerian civilians and nationalists.<sup>1</sup> Unlike any other war in French history, the Algerian War (1954–1962) has remained pivotal in determining French immigration and naturalization policies, national identity, media-constructed islamophobia, and social stratification. But what distinguishes the Algerian War from other wars of decolonization; what is the global importance of the war and Algerian independence? French Algeria was once France's largest settlement colony, and because France's Ministry of the Interior governed the colony, the region's three administrative departments were viewed as integral parts of the French republic. Algerian independence and, along with it, the dismantling of France's colonial empire therefore erased holistic conceptions of the French nation state. The war would eventually lead to the dissolution of the Fourth Republic, Charles de Gaulle's return to power, the drafting of a new constitution, the inauguration of France's current political system as well as significant demographic and cultural changes that would affect mainland France long after the end of the war.

The war also created new fissions and coalitions that would upset the social order in France and Algeria. A period marked by terrorism, urban warfare, mass exoduses, and human rights violations, the war years would lead to political and economic instability on both sides of the Mediterranean including an assassination attempt on de Gaulle, the sudden arrival of nearly one million Pieds-Noirs (Algerians of European descent) in need of housing and gainful employment in metropolitan France, the massacre of thousands of Harkis (supplementary Muslim forces to the French army) in Algeria, the placement of other Harkis and their families in internment camps throughout rural France, the establishment of a single-party police state in Algeria, the suppression of Algeria's ethnic minorities and languages, and a decade-long civil war between the Algerian government and Islamists. More than two million French conscripts and professional soldiers served in Algeria after France's humiliating defeat at Dien Bien Phu in Indochina in 1954. During the almost-eight-year war, hundreds of thousands of indigenous Algerians would also perish (Stora 1998, 7). Contrary to other wars in French and Algerian history, the Algerian War has irrevocably marked national history and collective memory. Indeed notable figures in contemporary politics still have ties to the war such as Jacques Chirac, France's president from 1995 until 2007; Jean-Marie Le Pen, the founder of France's extreme right-wing political party, the National Front (FN); and Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Algeria's current president in office since 1999.

The decolonization of Algeria represents a turning point in world history as well. The war marks the end of France's colonial empire, the birth of the Algerian republic, and the appearance of the Third World and pan-Arabism. Algeria emerged from colonial domination to successfully negotiate the release of the fifty-two American hostages in Iran during the Carter administration. Radical Islam would later rise from the ashes of Algeria's failed democracy, leading to a bloody civil war and al-Qaeda's training of Algerian terrorists in Afghanistan (Le Sueur 2010, 1). However, the decolonization of Algeria—described by historian James D. Le Sueur as a “zero-sum game” (2010, 11)—offered an imperfect model of decolonization to other nations, namely South Africa that succeeded in abolishing apartheid while retaining its white settler population. In Algeria, the violent acts of the Secret Armed Organization (OAS) rendered the Pied-Noir exodus inevitable and ultimately delayed Franco-Algerian reconciliation for several decades. In 1975, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing became the first French president to visit Algeria since independence. And Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika continues to grapple with the repatriation of surviving Harkis and their families. Bouteflika is the only Algerian head of state to visit France since the end of the war. This historic visit occurred in June 2000, three years before the inauguration of the yearlong cultural event, “*El Djazaïr: A Year of Algeria in France*,” sponsored by the French Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (McCormack 2007, 23).

The war's greater significance arguably stems from its inherent complexities. Historian Patricia Lorcin posits that the vertical sociopolitical violence of the colonial period (conflicts between colonizer and colonized)

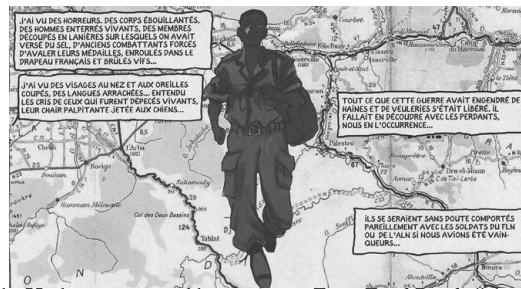
became multivectorial during the war. In addition to the original binary opposition, internal or what Lorcin calls “horizontal” struggles divided both camps (2006, xxiii). As the independence effort escalated, it became increasingly difficult to identify “the enemy.” The French separated into two main groups: those in favor of an independent Algeria and those in favor of French Algeria. Algerian nationalists were also split between two dominant factions: the Algerian National Movement (MNA) under Messali Hadj who supported a more peaceful revolution, and the National Liberation Front (FLN) who believed in the necessity of armed struggle and would later suffer from internal divisions. There were also the Muslims and Sephardic Jews who continued to support the French presence in Algeria. From this perspective, the Algerian War can be viewed as a French civil war, an Algerian civil war, and a Franco-Algerian war. Historians like Le Sueur have argued that references to the war as the “Algerian War” are misleading since they veil the war’s multiple dimensions. Le Sueur adds that this historical label is “Francocentric” because it implies that Algeria has only fought one defining war throughout its national history (2001, 261). While Le Sueur’s choice is certainly “more specific and neutral,” I have opted for the “more conventional” term (2001, 261). This decision comes from the basic assumption that the target French audience of the comics studied here would identify the war as the “Algerian War.” I will later explain the artistic and narrative devices used in this body of literature to deconstruct this oversimplified perception.

Returning to Lorcin’s reading of the Algerian War, she contends that the “quadrangular situation created a multilayered palimpsest of narratives on both sides, made up of mythologies, memories, and internalizations, some of which are only now beginning to surface” (2006, xxiii). Particularly in the late 1990s,<sup>2</sup> France began to regularly modify its national history curriculum so as to acknowledge the existence of—or perhaps even to confirm—a French collective memory of the war. Later curricular developments have led to a better understanding of how the war has affected minority communities and their descendants. While the war is remembered differently in Algeria and France, Lorcin maintains that historical accounts underscore the extreme violence of the colonization and decolonization of French Algeria that eventually redefined France and Algeria as independent nation states with new national borders (2006, xxiii). The numerous memorial practices that have since emerged serve to shape contemporary Algerian and French civil society and to frame a new social order within these societies.

Until 1999, France refused to recognize the war as such in official discourse and persistently discussed this conflict in terms of “peacekeeping operations” and other similar euphemisms.<sup>3</sup> While the war is now regularly taught in French secondary schools, textbook presentations of this period are cursory, passing quickly over the war’s causes, the ambiguous status of its actors, and the reasons for its particularly violent nature. According to French historian Sandrine Lemaire, textbook presentations of the war, even after numerous State curricular revisions, serve an important function with respect to national unity and the mythology surrounding French republicanism: “la guerre d’Algérie,” she writes, “permet de reformuler un ‘consensus républicain’ cristallisé autour de la condamnation des aspects les plus visibles et révoltants de la colonisation, mais pose simultanément un masque sur le système colonial en lui-même” [the Algerian War allows for the reformulation of a “republican consensus” focused on the condemnation of the most visible and revolting aspects of colonization while simultaneously masking the colonial system itself] (2011, 65).<sup>4</sup> Communities who already had a tenuous position in French society became further marginalized by the construction of these memory narratives. Certain memory communities such as the Harki, Pieds-Noirs, drafted soldiers, professional veteran soldiers, and Maghrebi immigrants have difficulty identifying with this republican consensus and its connection to founding mythologies and national metanarratives. Rarely do their memories coincide with French collective memory or French national history.

Farid Boudjellal’s *Le cousin harki* [The Harki Cousin]<sup>5</sup> uses techniques unique to comics precisely to challenge the legitimacy of the French republican consensus. In the vignette below (Figure I.1), Boudjellal positions the narrative’s central protagonist, Moktar, on a map of northern Algeria.<sup>6</sup> This image depicts an Arab wearing a French uniform set against a map of “his” country. However, as the preceding panels indicate, Moktar’s decision to enlist as a Harki soldier in the French army situates Moktar within a transnational, liminal space, one that defies national borders and denies Moktar’s claims for a national identity. Neither French nor Algerian, Moktar’s decision leaves him nationless and therefore artificially positioned on a map of Algeria rather than on the Algerian landscape itself. This fact is further reinforced by images of the French army abandoning the Harkis in March 1962. Using the Algerian map as a backdrop, Boudjellal effectively captures France and Algeria’s inability to understand the Harki community and the diversity of circumstances that led to the Harkis’ decision. As Moktar traverses the Algerian map and walks toward the reader, four narrative voice-overs explain the violence inflicted on the Harkis left in Algeria. Rather than illustrate the violence, Boudjellal focuses on its ubiquitous and inevitable character; Moktar—who represents all abandoned

Harkis—has nowhere to hide in an Algeria demanding justice for 132 years of French colonial violence and exploitation.



**Figure 1.1** The French army abandons the Harkis in postwar Algeria. *Source:* From Farid Boudjellal, *Le cousin harki*, p. 53. © Futuropolis, Paris, 2012.

The rectangular panel with its black border creates a visual contradiction. On one hand, the clearly delineated panel engenders a sense of stasis, freezing Moktar in mid-step much like a photographic image. On the other, the aerial view of Algeria and the representation of a forward-marching Moktar capture motion within a restrictive space. The reader becomes aware that despite his ambulations, Moktar risks immobility in the form of death, mutilation, or imprisonment as described in the first two narrative voice-overs. According to the final voice-over, the postwar violence would have occurred even if France had maintained Algeria as a colony: “Ils se seraient sans doute comportés pareillement avec les soldats du FLN ou de l’ALN si nous avions été vainqueurs” [They would have undoubtedly treated FLN or ALN (National Liberation Army—the armed wing of the FLN) soldiers the same way if we had won] (Boudjellal 2012, 53). With this observation, the French officer narrating this sequence defines violence as an integral part of Algerian Arab mentality. The rest of Boudjellal’s narrative, including the development of Moktar as a complex, sensitive, and dynamic character, simultaneously contradicts the officer’s assessment and reinforces the alienating effects of Harki identity. Here the republican consensus regarding the Harki is called into question. As can be seen from this brief analysis, Boudjellal’s narrative effectively dispels common myths and stereotypes of one of the war’s most controversial and misunderstood figures.

Boudjellal’s comic book, published in 2012 and set in 1970s’ France, demonstrates that the legacy of the Algerian War continues to influence France’s present. We cannot discuss the war and its various representations without discussing how the war as part of France’s past is understood and dealt with today. This inevitably leads us to the realms of history and memory. Pierre Nora differentiates between history and memory as follows: “La mémoire est un phénomène toujours actuel, un lien vécu au présent éternel; l’histoire, une représentation du passé” [Memory is a perpetually current phenomenon, a bond to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past] (1984, xix). Nora understands history as universal and memory as collective and individual. One could argue, however, that, in its denial of marginalized, individual memories, collective memory lends itself to the writing of history. Stated differently, the collective memory of the dominant group is often recorded as history. School textbooks, for example, defended and even glorified French colonialism from the Third Republic until the end of the 1950s, insisting on France’s grandeur due to the numerous colonies under its control (Lemaire 2011, 56–57). Nora also posits that “[d]ès qu’il y a une trace, distance, médiation, on n’est plus dans la mémoire vraie, mais dans l’histoire” [as soon as there are traces, distance, mediation, we are no longer in true memory, but in history] (1984, xix). But what if a traumatic event is not yet part of a nation’s distant past, what if certain episodes of the event fail to leave a perceptible impact, and what if mediation results in distortion? The erasure of an event’s historical complexity results in obfuscation and negationism, which ultimately refute instances of national misconduct like the October 17, 1961 Paris massacre and the French army’s widespread use of torture.

The Algerian War indisputably remains a historical taboo in France, despite being discussed in the public sphere, since many eyewitnesses, participants, and victims are still alive and active in contemporary politics. In certain cases, marginalized memory communities aggressively resist attempts to solidify an “official” version of the war. If some have spoken openly about their war experiences, most have opted to remain silent for fear of retaliation, expulsion, and death. Their fear is quite real. Algeria, for example, attempted to purge its Harki population after independence. Those who survived now live on the margins of society. In France, many Harkis have chosen to remain in rapidly deteriorating internment camps rather than demand adequate housing, government aid, and military pensions, all of which are available. The result is a general disassociation with French war narratives. With respect to Franco-Algerian politics, relations have been strained due to France’s ardent desire and Algeria’s vehement refusal to pardon Algerian War criminals. From



a cultural perspective, the war continues to play out in various ways: on the soccer field (e.g., the interrupted match between the French and Algerian national teams in October 2001<sup>7</sup>), in the *banlieues* [underprivileged suburbs of major cities] whose inhabitants have been stigmatized by rioting and violence, and at school as illustrated in Laurent Cantet's film *Entre les murs* ["The Class"]. The war has nevertheless led to positive changes in French cultural production that can be seen in music with the growing popularity of *raï* and Tuareg<sup>8</sup> bands, festivals such as the *Festival des Cinémas d'Afrique du Pays d'Apt* [African Film Festival of Apt Country], and the creation of North African—including Berber, an ethnic minority found in North Africa—and Pied-Noir cultural associations across France.

New generations of citizens can help promote the revitalization of French collective memory by speaking for their silenced parents and by unearthing some of the repressed memories of those who came before. But they lack their own direct memories of the war. Most writers, artists, filmmakers, and cartoonists working on the Algerian War today were either too young to remember the war or were born after 1962. These individuals must therefore generate what Marianne Hirsch calls a "postmemory" of the war, defined here as an indirect, personal memory generated from material traces of the past. Based on second-generation Holocaust literature, Hirsch's notion of postmemory (discussed in greater detail in chapter 7) can be distinguished from memory by time and from history by personal connection (1997, 22). Hirsch associates memory with first-generation survivors and postmemory with subsequent generations or descendants of survivors whose childhoods were shaped by first-generation narratives and their accompanying photographic images. Although image and text constitute vehicles for transmitting memory, Hirsch argues that photographs are particularly significant in that they separate postmemory from memory and memory from forgetting (1997, 22).

In France, new generations are creating and transmitting postmemories of the Algerian War. Their postmemories depend on the personal memories of survivors, French collective memory, and French national history. Regardless of the narrative potential that eyewitness accounts are uniquely positioned to offer, the silences and omissions that have rendered the tasks of remembering, historicizing, and teaching the war problematic on a national level also risk distorting the constitution of "viable" postmemories. This should not, however, discourage readers from engaging with postmemories. Because postmemories are irrevocably linked to the personal memories of survivors who are not always members of the dominant class, they provide a critical apparatus to study the convergence of history and memory and to identify and closely examine discrepancies between survivor testimony, family history, and institutionalized historical accounts. Comics on the Algerian War fill a specific need in French society precisely because they highlight trauma and the disruption and/or displacement of identities. Frequently authored by subsequent generation "survivors," these comics are rooted in France's current memory wars related to Algeria and thus reflect contemporary politics and issues including immigration, multiculturalism, Islam, unemployment, and racial discrimination.

Despite the utility of Pierre Nora's theoretical paradigm, it must be acknowledged that history and memory are intimately related; deciding where memory ends and history begins is, quite obviously, a difficult task. Mireille Rosello contends, "some narratives develop in a space that blurs the distinction between them [memory and history] or rather perform a type of cultural work that cannot be accommodated by an either-or logic" (2010, 17). In his study of the Algerian War, Jo McCormack agrees, explaining that history as a social science "provides a historical memory that is one representation of the past amongst others" (2007, 4). Hirsch's notion of postmemory offers a point of transition between history and memory, both collective and individual.

One could further argue that it is impossible to differentiate between collective and individual processes of remembering. Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs posits that "nos souvenirs demeurent collectifs, et ils nous sont rappelés par les autres, alors même qu'il s'agit d'événements auxquels nous seul avons été mêlé, et d'objets que nous seul avons vus. C'est qu'en réalité nous ne sommes jamais seul" [our memories remain collective, and other people remind us of this fact even though our memories pertain to events that only we experienced and to objects that only we saw. In reality, we are never alone] (1997, 52).<sup>9</sup> Despite the influence of a collective identity on a particular individual, he or she constitutes an individual or personal memory of people, places, objects, and events based on unique personal experiences. For instance, Anne Sibran, one of the cartoonists studied here, generates her memory of French Algeria and the Algerian War from specific childhood memories. She remembers listening to her Pied-Noir father's stories from her "fauteuil de velours rouge" [red velvet armchair] (Sibran 2003, 3). Even though French collective memory as a social form of remembrance influences how Sibran interprets her father's stories, her postmemory and thus representation of the war differ significantly from that of other cartoonists and other Pieds-Noirs.

Postmemory allows an individual or a generation (in the case of collective postmemory) to constitute his/her own memory of an event not directly experienced or witnessed. While postmemory involves a great deal of

imaginative creation, it is not synonymous with historical fiction. The writers, artists, filmmakers, and cartoonists responsible for generating postmemory have established a deep personal connection to the war. They are the children of soldiers, Pieds-Noirs, Harkis, political activists, and Algerian immigrants. Because they have parents or grandparents who participated in and/or were deeply affected by the war, they grew up listening to eyewitness accounts and survivor testimonies as well as viewing family photographs and picture postcards. Later, these same individuals would hear different narratives generated by the State, mainstream media, or respected historians. Unable to recreate their parents' memories as their own and intrigued by discrepancies between family memories and national history, they create postmemories whose narrative gaps are filled by newspapers, critical histories, film, literature, archives, and photographs. The resulting narrative mosaic is composed of various elements taken from collective and personal memories as well as national history. They are narratives that bear the mark of the original (parental memories) while maintaining their unique subjectivity. They are family memories studied through the prism of history, collective memory, and personal experience.

Postmemory is not an entirely innocent process of remembering and historicizing trauma, something to which narratives about other difficult historical moments such as Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, South African apartheid, and Latin American dictatorships of the 1970s can attest. Similar to memory and history, postmemory can be instrumentalized in order to serve a particular nation, group, or individual. Yet postmemory has the power to generate reparative narratives in which individuals attempt to insert themselves and their families into national metanarratives. For Rosello, "the reparative is an energy, a process, a specific set of narrative choices that propose to offer a conscious or unconscious strategy to a double process of recapturing and recovering" (2010, 22). Writers and artists recapture their parents' experiences so that they, their families, and the nation may recover from a political trauma that frequently hinges on identity and socioeconomic alienation. The process of constituting postmemory nevertheless remains a personal journey, one that explores the antagonisms inherent in family relationships, one that endeavors to reconcile parent and child. As an intermediary or "liminal" figure moving between history and memory and between Self and Other, guardians of postmemory have a fundamental role to play in balancing—without necessarily eradicating—the dialectical tension between war history and war memory.

In his seminal study, *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha uses the notion of "liminality" or "in-betweenness" to explain how cultural identity is negotiated across differences in class, gender, and race: "in-between' spaces," he writes, "provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself" (1994, 2). Jean-Robert Henry proposes a similar term, "*frontalier*" in an article published three years earlier.<sup>10</sup> Henry defines *frontaliers* as individuals or groups who inhabit the symbolic space separating two antagonistic societies or, one could argue, two antagonistic sectors of the same society like the Pied-Noir community in France (1991, 301). When used in this book, "*frontalier*" refers to a specific instance of Bhabha's liminality, one that describes the interstitial spaces located in between France and Algeria. The cartoonists studied throughout this book are either *frontaliers* themselves or highlight *frontalier* characters in their comic book narratives.

In his most recent study, cultural critic Mark McKinney underscores the importance of what he calls the "colonial affrontier" or the "imagined, invisible lines" that simultaneously unite and separate France and Algeria (2013a, 3). For McKinney, the affrontier and its associated figures, those "who guard [it], challenge it or disregard it" (2013a, 7) including conscripts, Pieds-Noirs, Algerian immigrants, and Harkis, suffer from past traumas erupting in the present. How, for instance, did these individuals react to the 2005 law (later repealed) that would have required schoolteachers to stress the positive aspects of colonialism, particularly in North Africa? The proposed law was an unmistakable attempt to conceal the colonial affrontier and to deny its significance to *frontaliers*. From this perspective, the affrontier is historically and socially meaningful because, to quote McKinney, it "includes a temporal and ontological tension between a dying colonialism, an ill-defined postcolonial present and a post/colonial future" (2013a, 3).

Like McKinney, many scholars have investigated the ways in which books have memorialized significant national events and contributed to the creation of memories, especially national memories. In *Le livre, mémoire de l'Histoire* [The Book, History's Memory], historian Benjamin Stora examines the relationship between the book and the Algerian War in an attempt to understand how France and Algeria have documented and narrativized this event. Despite the perceived absence of memory regarding the war in both countries (at least until the 1980s; this is the focus of Stora's seminal study *La gangrène et l'oubli* [Gangrene and Forgetting]), Stora notes the abundance of works published each year on the war. Cultural critic Jo McCormack, building on Stora's as well as historian Guy Pervillé's work, has also observed that the publication of this material constitutes neither a steady flow nor a homogeneous body of work (2007, 31). Certain periods witnessed the

publication of considerably more scholarship than others, particularly around anniversaries commemorating the end of the war: 1992 (the thirtieth anniversary), 2002 (fortieth), and 2012 (fiftieth). 1992 also coincides with the opening of previously inaccessible archives on the Algerian War in France (McCormack 2007, 30). Regarding the nature of these publications, McCormack notes that they began as various types of testimony (historical and political testimonies) and memoirs, followed by the introduction of journalistic accounts, fictional narratives, and finally more scholarly, scientific studies. The ebb and flow of publications on the war are linked to two opposing public forces: “periodic or limited ‘openings’—in the form of symbolic gestures, commemorations, or publications” and “more polemical disputes that tend to lead to ‘closing down’ concerning memory politics and management” (McCormack 2007, 24). Historians like Stora have even reevaluated and responded to their previous works in light of new developments in the public domain. A good example are assertions made in *La gangrène et l’oubli*, originally published in 1991, that Stora revisits and at times contradicts fourteen years later in *Le livre, mémoire de l’Histoire*.

Stora’s research for this last book led him to conclude that “[l]e livre émergeait alors comme *une archive à part entière*” [the book thus emerged as *an archive in its own right*] (2005, 7, his emphasis). It has become evident that the book lends itself as an efficient yardstick against which one can measure public perceptions of the war. The frequency with which subjects appear, the popularity of specific publications, the low print runs of others, censorship, the reprinting and remaindering of books, and the distribution of literary prizes all testify to which ideologies dominate a given decade. As public opinion and therefore collective memory are constantly evolving, a study of the Algerian War in the history of the (comic) book provides a platform for examining what Stora terms the “ajustement mémoriel” [memorial adjustment] in French society, meaning the diverse ways in which each generation and even segments of the same generation remember the war (2005, 8).

With his focus on the written word, Stora rejects the strength of the image, stating that “la puissance de l’image aujourd’hui n’a toujours pas atténué la force de l’écrit, du livre, toujours apte à faire fonctionner l’esprit” [the strength of the image today has yet to attain that of the written word, of the book, always able to get us thinking] (2005, 6). He does not dismiss, however, images published in books including testimonies, critical histories, and comics whose image/text dynamic offers viable representations of the Algerian War. It is thus the “imagetext” that W.J.T. Mitchell defines as “composite, synthetic works (or concepts) that combine image and text” (1994, 89)<sup>11</sup> that takes precedence over the image. As Hillary Chute contends, “the compounding of word and image has led to new possibilities for writing history that combine formal experimentation with an appeal to mass readerships” (2008, 459).

Building on this scholarship, the purpose of my book is to explore a topic only briefly mentioned in Stora’s research: the representation of the Algerian War in French comics.<sup>12</sup> It should be recognized that Mark McKinney has been publishing on French comics since the late 1990s. His work focuses on ethnic blending or “*métissage*,” postcolonial identity, and empire. His most recent book, *Redrawing French Empire in Comics* (2013), specifically examines comic book representations of French Indochina, French Algeria, and their decolonization. Ann Miller has also made substantial contributions to the field. Her most notable publication to date is *Reading Bande Dessinée: Critical Approaches to French-language Comic Strip* (2007), a must-read for students and scholars alike because it defines important terms and provides detailed analyses that illustrate how to approach comics from different analytical frameworks including postmodernism, narratology, cultural studies, psychoanalysis, and gender studies. *The current volume* aims to shed new light on this rapidly growing field of inquiry. In addition to presenting comics in which the war appears, this book investigates how comics uniquely problematize questions of history, collective memory, postmemory, and postcolonial identity. I also demonstrate, particularly in chapters 1 and 2, how comics problematize, complicate, and offer a historiographical and pedagogical alternative to history textbooks, one of the most widely circulated sources on national history.

Comics provide an interesting alternative to textbook representations because they draw from many of the same source materials yet produce narratives that are significantly different. Textbooks are genre-bound and central to official projects looking to create the illusion of national coherence. Although contemporary politics influence the production of both textbooks and comics, comics exist outside of official channels (i.e., their publication is not mandated for use in the classroom). If comics rely on conventional vectors of memory transmission like national education, the family, and mainstream media, they can also create new and productive dialogues using these same vectors in ways unavailable to traditional textbooks. This idea will become increasingly clearer in subsequent chapters. Finally, my preference for comics comes from my reading of this medium as a self-reflexive genre, one in which the reader is constantly made aware of the image as representation and not objective truth.

Given their marginal or paraliterary status in literary and academic circles (this point is becoming more and

more debatable), comics are a medium in which just about anything goes. Certain subjects are more easily addressed in comics than in highly codified canonical literatures or in cinema whose plotlines, character development, and visual representation are largely controlled by commercial film producers. From this perspective, comics surface as a more democratic and flexible form of cultural production. The hybrid nature and liminal status of comics allow cartoonists to engage with various sources and to provide critical interpretations of existent cultural production about French Algeria and the war. McKinney writes that the medium's "visual-verbal format allows it to include colonial-era visual representations, and rework or otherwise comment on them, especially through narrative. The dialogical, narrative and visual capacities of comics allow cartoonists to re-view and re-tell the colonial past in ways that are much more difficult, or even impossible for other sorts of artists" (2013a, 27).

As a form of popular cultural production, comics also reflect remembrance as a social process. Francis Lacassin, for example, underscores the medium's aptitude for providing witness accounts: "Plus importante est encore leur aptitude au témoignage. Destinées à la masse et reflétant ses préoccupations, souvent en prise très étroite avec la réalité, [les bandes dessinées] jouent le rôle d'un miroir qui conserverait indéfiniment les images qu'il reflète" [More important still is their aptitude for providing witness accounts. Destined for the masses and reflective of their concerns (often closely tied to reality), comics play the role of a mirror that indefinitely preserves the images it reflects] (1971, 340). If historians wish to know how a contemporary public perceived the Algerian War, Lacassin argues, they should consult comics published between 1954 and 1962. However, for this period, they will find neither albums in favor of Algerian independence nor those that celebrate France "from Dunkirk to Tamanrasset" (de Gaulle's vision of France in 1958), leaving historians to conclude that the public did not feel particularly concerned by the war or, at the very least, by various aspects of the war (Lacassin 1971, 318). Lacassin's assessment is not false, given that France waited nearly forty years after signing the Evian Peace Agreements before officially recognizing the Algerian "events" as a war.

In the 1980s and 1990s when the first postwar generation was of university age and Algeria's single-party system began to falter—putting Algeria back on France's political radar—(McCormack 2007, 29), France initiated public dialogues about the war's historical taboos in official discourse and schools. The Algerian War began to appear in comics and other fictional modes of representation with greater frequency. In addition to the marked increase in albums published on the war each year, readers should note that these comics are winning awards and are often the subject of national and regional exhibits. To cite just one example, Jacques Ferrandez's *Carnets d'Orient* [Sketchbooks of the Orient] series was recently the focus of an exhibit presented at the *Musée de l'Armée* [Army Museum] in Paris. The exhibit, entitled "Algérie 1830–1962. Avec Jacques Ferrandez" [Algeria 1830–1962. With Jacques Ferrandez], was on display from May 16 through July 29, 2012. The increased visibility of war narratives among laureates at the Angoulême International Comics Festival signifies that these comics have artistic merit, and that a shift has occurred within the reading public from indifference (based on Lacassin's 1971 observation) to fascination vis-à-vis the war. This twenty-year shift indicates that the nation's memory wars have finally spread to comics, a genre once associated with escapism and mass-market entertainment. Among the albums studied here, five have been recognized at Angoulême: Baru and Jean-Marc Thévenet's *Le chemin de l'Amérique* [Road to America], Frank Giroud and Christian Lax's *Azrayen*, Farid Boudjellal's *Petit Polio* [Little Polio], Jacques Ferrandez's *La guerre fantôme* [The Phantom War], and Manu Larcenet's *Le combat ordinaire* [Ordinary Combat]. Of these comics, two were awarded the prize for Best Album (*Le chemin de l'Amérique* in 1991 and *Le combat ordinaire* in 2004); one received the Critics' Award (*Azrayen* in 1999), one the Ecumenical Jury of Comic Books Award (*Petit Polio* in 1999), and one the France Info Prize (*La guerre fantôme* in 2003).<sup>13</sup> The choice for these awards suggests that its not only the cartoonists that are willing to open the Pandora's box of cultural memory and amnesia, but that the public—young and old—is as well.

Despite the current popularity of historical comics, the medium's paraliterary status continues to affect cartoonists and the reception of their work. While teachers in secondary schools sometimes incorporate comics into their lessons on national history, students are reluctant to view them as valid pedagogical supplements. However, more so than novelists and artists working in other media, cartoonists exploit authentic textual and iconographic source material in their attempt to confer a measure of historical and visual accuracy on their representations of war history. According to Fanch Juteau,

[l]a Bande Dessinée historique . . . offre un travail de reconstitution et de synthèse qui, même s'il est partiel, est forcément intéressant. Même scientifiquement. En fait, ce travail intègre des données, des sources que l'Histoire universitaire s'autorise rarement—du moins pas ainsi mêlées—, en piochant à la fois dans le roman, le cinéma, le livre d'Histoire et l'archive. (2001, 86)

[historical comics are works of reconstruction and synthesis that, even if they remain partial, are always interesting, even scholarly. In fact, comics incorporate data and sources that academic history rarely allows—at least when they are used together—, by simultaneously drawing from novels, films, critical histories, and archives.]



Comics are useful sources because their recycling of texts and images encourages reader participation by engaging with and subsequently problematizing collective memory, dominant discourses, and official histories that have been transmitted in schools and the mass media. While not all cartoonists function as guardians of postmemory or as *frontaliers* (defined above), their albums make a unique contribution to how the war is transmitted to future generations of French citizens because they recontextualize iconic and often problematic representations of otherness and war. Of course not all cartoonists use comics to challenge dominant ideologies and to revise colonialist paradigms. I am, however, primarily interested in those that do. For this reason, special attention is paid to cartoonists who privilege “polyphonic” narratives<sup>14</sup> and who capitalize on their personal connection to French Algeria and/or the Algerian War such as Jacques Ferrandez (b. 1955), Anne Sibran (b. 1963), Morvandiau (b. 1974),<sup>15</sup> Denis Merezette (b. 1960), Farid Boudjellal (b. 1953),<sup>16</sup> Azouz Begag (b. 1957), Djillali Defali (b. 1972), Frank Giroud (b. 1956), and Sid Ali Melouah (1949–2007). McKinney makes a similar statement: “the cartoonists who have most extensively represented the Algerian War are from the generations born or raised during it or after, which sometimes witnessed the conflict and are now trying to make sense of it” (2013a, 151). Furthermore, each of the above cartoonists identifies with at least one memory community but includes voices from competing memory communities in their narratives. Ferrandez, Sibran, Morvandiau, and Merezette come from Pied-Noir families now living in France. Boudjellal, Begag, and Defali were born in France of Algerian heritage. Giroud’s father was a soldier during the Algerian War. Sid Ali Melouah was born in Algeria but later sought voluntary exile in France to avoid persecution by Islamic fundamentalists. Reading their comics as instances of postmemory allows us to understand their potential to act as reparative narratives in the history classroom and in contemporary French society; it allows us to politicize and historicize personal accounts within a broader historical context. By contextualizing their choice of source materials, we can better understand the greater cultural importance of these comics, which actively contribute to a growing global postcolonial cultural space created by diasporas and ethno-cultural blending.

One obstacle to studying comics is the pronounced inconsistency in critical approaches. Due to the medium’s representational hybridism and multimodal narration, critics have found it challenging to select an appropriate theoretical framework to study the duality of words and images. As previously indicated, Ann Miller presents different theoretical frameworks within which critics can analyze the formal features of comics. In the second part of her book, she demonstrates how these frameworks can be used individually to interpret an album (defined here as a published comic book) or series (related albums by the same cartoonist). Readers will discover that some critics highlight the narrative structure of comics using methods suitable for prose analysis (e.g., character development, plot and discourse analysis). Others focus on the pictorial quality of images, opting for a visual approach using techniques applied to the study of art history (e.g., perspective and composition). Still others recognize the similarities between comics and film, drawing their arguments from film theory (e.g., suture). Most, however, favor a combination of the three. Comics scholar Bart Beaty further clarifies that this variety of approaches depends on the departments, mainly literature, history, and sociology, in which scholars are housed (2007, 8).

In France and Belgium, there is a distinct tendency to structure comic book analyses on semiotics. This approach is perhaps the best suited to the study of comics given that image and word both function as language. W.J.T. Mitchell writes, “from the *semantic* point of view, . . . there is no essential difference between texts and images and thus no gap between the media to be overcome by any special ekphrastic strategies” (1994, 160, his emphasis). Mitchell goes on to argue that speech acts are never medium-specific. They may be expressed as verbal or visual signs (Mitchell 1994, 160). The fact that societies have used or currently use pictograms such as hieroglyphics and cuneiform script in place of written language supports Mitchell’s postulate. Even cultures whose communication is largely dependent on the written word still use symbols and logograms for the expression of certain ideas (e.g., European traffic signs). For these reasons, my critical approach to comics is interdisciplinary and highly indebted to Susan Sontag’s, Roland Barthes’, and Marianne Hirsch’s writings on photography as well as to Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Sandrine Lemaire’s notion of “French colonial culture” defined in chapter 2. Within the fields of postcolonial comics and history, my work builds explicitly on the scholarship of Mark McKinney, Ann Miller, Jo McCormack, and Mireille Rosello. As a literary scholar, I focus less on a critical evaluation of the cartoonists’ visual style, emphasizing instead the interaction between word and image and the articulation of multimodal war narratives.

The analytical starting point for this book is the transmission of a multimodal war narrative using the history textbook. As one of Althusser’s Ideological State Apparatuses, institutionalized education is constantly under fire for its dissemination of knowledge that is believed to form and/or reflect collective memory and national metanarratives. Education, educators, school administrators, and textbooks consequently find themselves at

the epicenter of memory wars in France and elsewhere. According to Sandrine Lemaire, “[l]’école, comme dernière institution traditionnelle de socialisation, mais aussi comme moyen essentiel de transmission, est au cœur des enjeux de mémoire” [education, as the last traditional institution of socialization and as an essential means of transmission, is at the heart of memory debates] (2006, 98). In chapter 1, I examine textbook representations of the Algerian War based on recent State-mandated changes to the high school history curriculum. My primary objective is to identify recent improvements and current deficiencies regarding how the war is taught in French secondary schools. A survey of common textbooks used in France and their war narratives provides the foundations for my book’s central argument. Because the history textbook is central to national histories, it is imperative to problematize this genre and compare it to other cultural forms. Throughout this book, I argue that many historical comics on the Algerian War perform this function so that more memory communities are served, history is problematized, wounds are allowed to heal, and so that contemporary societies can move toward more inclusive practices and greater tolerance. My objective is to illustrate the ways in which French comics on the Algerian War create historical memory and influence how contemporary France engages with its colonial past and manages its postcolonial present. If historians and critics deem textbook representations of the Algerian War inadequate, I argue that educators can use nontraditional ancillary materials like comics to compensate for these inadequacies.

After engaging with various critiques of textbook narratives and their presentation of national history, chapter 2 argues in favor of using comics as a pedagogical tool. Because comics frequently cite and/or recycle authentic textual and iconographic source material documenting the French colonization of Algeria, the Algerian War, and the repercussions on various communities, they represent a valuable resource to history teachers looking to supplement textbooks and classic models of classroom instruction. The medium’s relationship with history and collective memory suggests that it would complement school textbooks and their reductive depictions of the Algerian War. Subject to the same limitations and representational hazards as the history textbook, comics are potentially problematic. According to McKinney, comics “offer unique opportunities to reproduce and perpetuate colonial ideologies, images and discourses, as well as to critique them. The ways and degree to which they do one or the other tell us a great deal about the place of imperialism and colonialism in French society” (2013a, 29). For this reason, chapter 2 engages with “French colonial culture” so as to explain the similarities between comics and textbooks and to flesh out the fundamental differences that distinguish comics as an effective mode of historical representation, despite the medium’s possible weaknesses.

The comics and cartoonists selected for this study are those who actively contest colonial ideologies by reworking colonial-era iconography. Several of these cartoonists are well known in France today—partly because they have made a name for themselves prior to working on the war, and partly because their work on the war has received international recognition at Angoulême. Representations of the Algerian War skyrocketed in the late 1980s and 1990s with the artistic and intellectual maturity of second-generation cartoonists (i.e., those whose families had been directly affected by the war). As members of the second-generation, these cartoonists have little or no direct memory of the war. Consequently, their creative process largely depends on their reading of historical and family documents. Whether or not their albums are purely historical, the war furnishes a seemingly inexhaustible amount of material for verbal and visual content. Several comics studied here contain noteworthy paratextual elements related to this material.

In chapters 3 and 4, I assess the significance of added or inserted textual and visual elements including professional endorsements, critical histories, press clippings, and documentary photographs in historical comics to determine how cartoonists use these raw materials to shape their verbal and visual narratives. Emphasis is on the inclusion of specific textual components for the purpose of authenticating historical and biographical models. Chapters 3 and 4 examine how comics use paratextual elements to valorize itself as a medium (chapter 3) and to narrativize history (chapter 4). Since comics retain their cultural stigma, the choice of a third party such as a respected historian or prominent literary figure to author a foreword, for example, has the potential to improve album reception among readers and critics. The addition of paratextual material such as prefaces, forewords, afterwords, and bibliographies (the focus of chapter 3) as well as period newspapers and documentary images (chapter 4) serves to historically contextualize narrative, provide evidence for an album’s historical claims, and highlight the contribution of popular culture not only to the constitution of a collective war memory, but also to how contemporary societies contend with postcolonial legacies.

In contrast, cartoonists’ reliance on colonial iconography throughout the creative process risks undermining their attempts at historical and representational authentication. If cartoonists rely on certain types of source material to authenticate their narratives, some fall prey to colonial and Orientalist ideologies dictating the representation of Self and Other—especially if they rely too heavily on Orientalist and colonialist iconography. As McKinney explains, a sustained reading of postcolonial comics and their “mining and

recycling” of materials is necessary for understanding how the Algerian War, as part of France’s past, reflects societal issues in France’s present (2013a, 79). Chapters 5 and 6 therefore investigate the recycling of Orientalist tropes in comic book representations of the colonial Other (chapter 5) and colonial landscapes (chapter 6). Emphasis is placed on how cartoonists have reshaped their “inherited” Orientalist tradition in postcolonial narratives via the strategic re-appropriation of specific visual themes. While underlining the problematic representation of indigenous spaces and colonized people whose voices are essentially absent from textbook narratives (Lemaire 2011, 63), chapters 5 and 6 aim to define the “postcolonial paradox” in French comics on the war. The recycling of Orientalist painting and erotic postcards in historical comics suggests that postcolonial cartoonists, regardless of their cultural background, are simultaneously attracted to and repulsed by the colonial iconography that has been perpetuating symbolic violence since the mid-nineteenth century. Rather than ease this dialectal tension and resolve the postcolonial paradox, socially conscious cartoonists who are critical of historical representation use their art to better understand the relationship between Self and Other and between their colonial heritage and present postcolonial discourses.

While postcolonial Francophone literature is normally understood as “l’ensemble des littératures d’expression française issues de l’expansion coloniale (donc produites hors d’Europe)” [all literatures written in French resulting from colonial expansion (therefore produced outside Europe)] (Moura 1999, 33), cartoonists of European origin like Jacques Ferrandez, Anne Sibran, Morvandiau, and Denis Merezette should also be labeled as “postcolonial.” Failure to include them in discussions on postcolonial literatures implies that the colonies did not influence metropolitan France and that colonialism was a one-way exchange. In chapters 5 and 6, I argue that cartoonists use comics’ image/text dynamic to explore the postcolonial paradox, understand their relationship to it, and encourage readers to question how their perception of France’s colonies is actually a product of French colonial culture, a concept first introduced in chapter 2.

Moving from a pedagogical approach to a more personalized approach to historical comics in which cartoonists engage with the various paradoxes mentioned above, chapter 7 examines how cartoonists use this form of multimodal narrative to constitute their own personal postmemory. In this chapter, I read select comic books as instances of postmemory in which material traces of the past are recycled to establish a direct line of communication between cartoonists and the war. In so doing, cartoonists respond to deficiencies in textbook representations (examined in chapter 1) that favor a distanced and dehumanized approach to the Algerian War. In cartoonists’ attempts to demystify and demythologize the war, their presentations reposition the human at the center of French national history. For this reason, it is imperative to decenter the textbook as an authority on national history and to expand our knowledge of French history through a close reading and understanding of comics. Comics offer opportunities to critically engage students and other citizens with national history so that they may develop an “appreciation for the challenges involved in constructing nuanced and complex historical accounts” (Cromer and Clark 2007, 589). The postcolonial attitudes of the comics studied throughout this book provide readers in France and other former imperial powers with a productive space in which to address the specific sociopolitical challenges created by colonization and decolonization. Finally, “The Postcolonial Turn in Teaching, Remembering, and Cartooning” serves as a general conclusion, demonstrating how these comics contribute to a more globalized understanding of the nation and the place of the nation in today’s world.

*The current volume* is centered on the vectors of memory transmission studied in Jo McCormack’s seminal work, *Collective Memory: France and the Algerian War (1954–1962)*. McCormack concludes that these vectors —“the teaching of school history, discussion in the family, and reporting in the media”—can actually become obstacles in the transmission process (2007, 170). My study of these same vectors (education and academic history in chapters 1, 2, and 3; the media and the arts in chapters 4, 5, and 6; and the family in chapter 7) reveals the potential of postmemorial narrative. I argue that cartoonists can use this medium to rework and eventually critique problematic vectors of memory transmission in society. Postcolonial comics that engage with postmemory ultimately propose new methods of writing national history and transmitting the multiple forms memory can take. From this perspective, these comics are an effective and alternative way to develop a more inclusive social consciousness.

## NOTES

1. Figures vary according to their source.
2. Jo McCormack cites 1983 as the first year the war was taught in high school (2007, 27, 33).
3. Despite the state’s failure to officially recognize the Algerian War as a “war” in public discourse before 1999, Jo McCormack observes that plaques commemorating fallen soldiers of the “Algerian War” began appearing on national monuments as early as 1998 (2007, 19–20).
4. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.
5. See Mark McKinney’s section on “Who speaks for the Harki?” in *Redrawing French Empire in Comics* for a brief discussion of Boudjellal’s *Le cousin harki* (194–95). Lucie Knight-Santos offers a more detailed analysis of this comic book in her contribution to *A Practical Guide to*



6. Lucie Knight-Santos proposes a different reading of this particular image in “Refinding/Redefining Familial Bonds: Farid Boudjellal’s *Le Cousin Harki*.”

7. See the first chapter of Mireille Rosello’s *France and the Maghreb: Performative Encounters* for a detailed analysis of this match.

8. The Tuareg are an ethnic minority related to the Berbers of Algeria and Morocco. Traditionally, this population is nomadic and lives in the Saharan regions of Algeria, Niger, and Mali.

9. See chapter 1 of Jo McCormack’s *Collective Memory: France and the Algerian War (1954–1962)* for an excellent summary of the major theoretical models of collective memory (the Halbwachsian school, the Freudian school, and social constructionist school).

10. I owe my discovery of Jean-Robert Henry’s concept of the *frontalier* to Mark McKinney’s article: “‘Tout cela, je ne voulais pas le laisser perdre’: colonial lieux de mémoire in the comic books of Jacques Ferrandez.”

11. In *Picture Theory*, Mitchell differentiates between “image/text,” “imagetext,” and “image-text.” “Image/text” refers to the problematic rupture in representation between image and text; “imagetext” to the synthetic works combining image and text (comics); and “image-text” to the relationship between visual and verbal representation (Mitchell 1994, 89).

12. My decision to focus on French comics and not Algerian French-language comics is based on the lack of availability and diversity of the latter. Based on my research, the majority of comics on the Algerian War published in Algeria appear during the 1980s, when the Algerian government sought to popularize the revolution and use it to create national unity despite a deepening economic crisis and growing civil unrest in response to the country’s failing single-party political system (see Howell 2009).

13. Mark McKinney (1997; 2001; 2004; 2008a; 2008c; 2011a; 2011b; 2013a; 2013b) and Ann Miller (2007a; 2007b) have studied several of these comics and cartoonists elsewhere.

14. Mark McKinney uses “polyphonic” in reference to “works that redraw empire critically and dialogically, from various, conflicting perspectives” (2013, 151). When I use this term in *the current volume*, I am referring to McKinney’s definition.

15. Ann Miller published an interview with Morvandiau in *European Comic Art* in 2011.

16. Mark McKinney published an interview with Farid Boudjellal in *European Comic Art* in 2011.

*Chapter 1*

**“De case en classe”**

*Teaching the Algerian War*

Throughout<sup>1</sup> this book, I examine the ways in which historical comics produce a specific kind of narrative anchored in world, national, and family history. Historical comic book narratives on the Algerian War weigh the value of individual and collective memories against that of nationalist representations found in national history textbooks. Textbooks attempt to construct a dominant collective memory stressing positive aspects of national identity. Yet comics and textbooks are both examples of historical narratives that can, and often do, incorporate fictional elements to create the illusion of social cohesion. In this chapter, I look specifically at textbook narratives due to their central, national importance in creating and maintaining a collective memory of the Algerian War. Subsequent chapters focus on how historical comics achieve a similar goal while attempting to avoid the major pitfalls of textbook narrative. To this effect, comics scholar Joseph Witek raises an especially pertinent question: “since no narrative history can transcend interpretation, perhaps a more fruitful question to ask is: *why* are these stories told the way they are, and what social implications do their narrative choices entail?” (1989, 30, his emphasis). In what follows, I analyze why high school textbooks recount the Algerian War the way they do as well as the end result of their representation. After a brief survey of history textbooks, I return to my book’s primary foci: (1) why and how comics constitute a postmemory of the Algerian War; and (2) the greater social implications of publishing postmemorial (as opposed to nationalist) postcolonial comics.

In *Historical Thinking*, Sam Wineburg, a professor of history and education at Stanford University, applies Roland Barthes’ notion of the “referential illusion” (Barthes 1986, 148)—or the articulation of an unvarnished truth—to his study of the national history textbook. He writes that textbook narratives are thought to accurately reflect historical reality and are therefore privileged over other historical narratives such as fiction and the documentary record (Wineburg 2001, 12). How do history textbooks create this illusion? According to Wineburg, they “exploit various linguistic conventions” including the elimination of metadiscourse, the use of an omniscient third-person narrator, and the failure to cite or properly integrate primary sources (2001, 12).

The absence of a metadiscourse in textbooks appears contradictory to how historians present their scholarship. The historian often interjects in order to indicate his/her subject position with respect to information presented. Metadiscourse acts as an interpretative filter, serving to elucidate the act and context of writing about history. Without metadiscourse, it is impossible to determine the effects of a visible author on textbook readers who read a text without the author’s direction. Similar to the erasure of metadiscourse is the preference for omniscient narrators who render authors even more invisible to readers. In Wineburg’s terms, “instead, a corporate author speaks from a position of transcendence, a position of knowing from on high” (2001, 12). In the United States (the focus of Wineburg’s research), the Texas School Board of Education’s revisionist tendencies, recently under fire in Washington and national news, and the state’s influential textbook market take advantage of this corporate vantage point in order to disguise and even discount less popular historical perspectives—less popular, that is, among Texas conservatives.

This special packaging of history is reductive and problematic given that students are seldom aware of debates surrounding the presentation of history. Rather than understand how and why certain historical events and figures have been selected, student access to historical knowledge is limited to the result of the selection process. The events and figures that have made the final cut are believed to represent an “objective” and “official” version of national history. From a student perspective, the objectivity and official character of textbook narratives are partially justified by a teacher’s textbook choice. After all, why would a teacher require a textbook for classroom use if it failed to “faithfully” portray national history? Because students are only exposed to the end result (i.e., their required textbook), the task of critically interpreting primary sources is left to American textbook publishers. I later demonstrate that this is not entirely the case for French textbooks.

Publishers' interpretations are then accepted as "true" presentations of national history. Wineburg notes that American textbooks rarely cite primary material or, if they do, this material is relegated to dialogue boxes or marginalized sidebars so as not to disrupt the student's flow of reading or to detract him/her from main narrative content (2001, 12). This additional convention signifies that American students never learn how to approach historical documents independently. As the raw materials of national history, students do not use these documents to create meaning. Instead, the textbook industry manipulates these materials to disseminate carefully chosen versions of history that align with national metanarratives.

For the purposes of my study, Wineburg's analysis raises the question of whether French history textbooks make use of the same "linguistic conventions." If so, how do nontraditional teaching materials such as comics differ? If secondary literature on history pedagogy in France underscores the debate between history and memory outlined in this book's introduction, attention is just now turning toward how the history and a certain memory of the Algerian War have been narrativized or packaged for consumption in scholastic publications. From this perspective, Jo McCormack's 2007 book, *Collective Memory*, is groundbreaking. Building on the 1992 conference on memory and teaching of the Algerian War co-organized by the *Institut du monde arabe* [Institute of the Arab World] and the *Ligue de l'enseignement* [Education League] in Paris, McCormack explains that apart from the conference's proceedings, insufficient research has been done in the field. He cites, however, two notable scholars, Guy Pervillé and Paul Fournier, who have studied textbook presentations of the Algerian War. McCormack contributes to this limited, preexisting scholarship and skillfully demonstrates that the narrativization of history in textbooks is a critical process that shapes national identity by shaping memory. The fact that publishers are constantly revising their products in accordance with educational policies and national politics, among other factors, is a clear indication that textbook content and, consequently, national identity and collective memory are never static.

In what follows, I build on McCormack's research and provide a close reading of six *terminale*-level textbooks published in 2007 and 2008 based on the 2007 *terminale* curriculum; one *terminale*-level textbook published in 2012 based on the 2012 curriculum; one *première*-level textbook published in 2007 based on the 2003 *première* curriculum; and one *première*-level textbook published in 2011 based on the 2011 curriculum. I analyze how historical discourse as narrative is constructed in each of these texts. Later in this section, I examine recent changes to the State history curriculum and how new editions of textbooks respond to State recommendations—specifically those that administrators at a school in Épinal, France adopted for use in *terminale* (the third of France's three years of high school) and *première* (the second year) during the 2013–2014 academic year.

The connection made here between comics and history textbooks is an important component of my project that developed from conversations with a French secondary school teacher. Étienne Augris, a history and geography teacher at Claude Gellée High School in Épinal, France, learned about my project while researching alternative approaches to teaching the Algerian War in *première*. Augris shared pages from commonly used *terminale*- and *première*-level textbooks on colonial history and the history of decolonization. Taken from textbooks distributed by educational publishing giants Belin, Bréal, Hachette, Hatier, Magnard, and Nathan, these pages were his response to my inquiry on how textbooks, which respect State recommendations on the teaching of national history, present French Algeria and the Algerian War. His selection of mostly *terminale*-level textbooks during our initial correspondence reflects the State's recommended focus on the war in *terminale* beginning in 1983 (McCormack 2007, 32). The State, prone to regular revisions of its various curricula, has since proposed a new history curriculum that recent editions of these same textbooks refer to on their front cover as "Programme 2012" [Curriculum 2012] or simply "Nouveau Programme" [New Curriculum].

In this chapter, my analysis focuses on the seven textbooks my colleague sent and on those that his school in Épinal ultimately selected for use in *première* (the level Augris teaches) and *terminale* (the level in which students theoretically learn the most about the Algerian War). To keep this study within manageable proportions, I am limiting my examination of textbooks to those Augris shared and to books recently adopted at his school. Because Augris' classroom and methodology are examined in chapter 2, a study of the textbooks at his disposal is relevant to why he decided to supplement in-class instruction with comics. The reason Augris had a choice in classroom materials is that educators in France are not bound to a particular textbook; according to the French Ministry of Education, educators benefit from "la liberté pédagogique" [instructional freedom] (Legifrance 2005). This signifies that the only requirement for instruction is the State curriculum: "il revient à chaque enseignant de s'appropriier les programmes dont il a la charge, d'organiser le travail de ses élèves et de choisir les méthodes qui lui semblent les plus adaptées en fonction des objectifs à atteindre" [it is up to each teacher to take on the curricula for which he/she is responsible, to organize his/her students' work, and to choose the methods that he/she feels are the most appropriate based on learning objectives] (Éduscol

2012). This means that educators are free to choose instructional material as long as students are exposed to the required historical knowledge legislators have identified for each level.

While reading Augris' textbook excerpts sent in 2010, a general tendency in terms of how information is presented became apparent. French textbooks privilege either a documentary or a "hybrid" approach to the Algerian War. After a brief, three-sentence introduction, Bourel et al., for example, rely entirely on primary sources (image and text) to present certain aspects of the war, notably the Battle of Algiers, de Gaulle's return to power, torture, and political demonstrations in France and Algeria. Students are then asked comprehension questions based on individual documents and later big-picture questions on the relationship between documents. In contrast, Bourquin et al. propose a hybrid presentation, alternating between narrativized content and primary sources. Narrative is nevertheless minimized. For instance, the authors summarize the war in one page organized into three major sections: the prewar period (1830–1954), the war under France's Fourth Republic (1954–1958), and Algerian independence (1958–1962). The last period coincides with the embryonic years of France's Fifth Republic. A number of special dossiers appearing several chapters later introduce students to the documentary record consisting of excerpts of political speeches, magazine covers, political cartoons, and a government official's letter of resignation. Even though textbooks incorporate some narrative—typically a few short sentences contextualizing the documents that follow—, most prioritize placing students in "direct" contact with the documentary record.

This historical presentation, which focuses on primary documents, provides potential solutions to some of the inadequacies found in American textbooks on national history and highlighted in Wineburg's study. But while this approach invites student interpretation, the invitation is less open than it might seem. French textbook publishers deliberately mediate a student's experience of primary source material. Publishers must first decide which documents, then which parts of these documents, to present, and finally how to frame chosen excerpts within each chapter. Jo McCormack argues that each French textbook represents an "interpretation" of the national history curriculum (2007, 59). If Wineburg criticizes the absence of primary sources in American textbooks, the inclusion of primary sources in French textbooks is equally problematic, but for different reasons. Firstly, it must be acknowledged that French publishers give voice to contradictory viewpoints. For example, Bourquin et al. include neighboring excerpts from the September 6, 1960 "Manifeste de 121 intellectuels" [Manifesto of 121 Intellectuals]—an open letter to the French government recognizing the war as a legitimate struggle for independence and condemning the army's use of torture—and the conservatives' counter-manifesto published in *Le Figaro* one month later. Some publishers also present narratives that contest French national metanarratives. Falaize et al. include an excerpt from Fatima Besnaci-Lancou's *Fille de harki* [The Harki's Daughter] in which she openly criticizes France's treatment of the Harki community. Finally, Lambin et al. insert a photograph of the October 17, 1961 Paris massacre and Paul Teitgen's (the General Secretary of Police in Algiers) resignation letter in which he denounces the French army's use of torture in Algeria.

Notwithstanding the importance of textual documents, textbook publishers clearly privilege iconic images of war. Iconic images are recognizable by a significant subset of the general population. They do not merely represent what the photographer's lens has captured. Rather, their individual meaning as an image alludes to a greater contextual meaning; they represent something beyond what is pictured and often stand in for what is represented. One example is Nick Ut's widely circulated Pulitzer-prize winning photograph, "Accidental Napalm," which has come to represent the horrors of the American Vietnam War and, arguably, the war itself. Regarding the Algerian War, images of the Pied-Noir exodus and the week of barricades in Algiers constitute some of the best-known images from this period. Unsurprisingly, four out of the seven textbooks shared by Augris contain photographs of the Pied-Noir exodus, each depicting doleful families sitting on suitcases in Marseille. In addition, they include some of the better-known written documents (or iconic materials) mentioned above. Passages from Paul Teitgen's letter appear in three textbooks; excerpts from Guy Mollet's speech justifying the "*pouvoirs spéciaux*" [special powers] in Algeria also appear three times. Originally opposed to French colonialism, Prime Minister Guy Mollet later argued that the French army needed to crush the FLN insurgency using exceptional measures that included torture and counterterrorism, also known as the *pouvoirs spéciaux*, before negotiations relative to the decolonization of Algeria could begin.

There are ways other than the overuse of iconic images and materials through which history textbooks can stifle historical learning, critical thinking, and alternative creations of historical memory. In another research study of U.S. schoolbooks, James W. Loewen argues that "[b]etween the glossy covers, American history textbooks are full of information—overly full. These books are huge. The specimens in my original collection of a dozen of the most popular textbooks averaged four and a half pounds in weight and 888 pages in length" (2007, 3). Loewen was astonished to discover that textbooks have only grown larger in recent years. Add to this content of gargantuan proportions the seemingly infinite amount of information available on textbook

companion websites, Wikipedia, and the Internet in general. Given this overwhelming amount of historical content, educators should not be surprised that American students have difficulty retaining information that, in all probability, they are not reading in the first place. For Loewen, as for Wineburg, one of the greatest problems with American history books is that they “stifle meaning by suppressing causation. Students exit history textbooks without having developed the ability to think coherently about social life” (Loewen 2007, 6–7). Without investigating the causes of past events—often presented as long lists of names and dates—, students are unable to apply critical, historical thinking to the present. An overemphasis on present-day events or “presentism” is not the answer; using the past to understand the present is, however, of fundamental importance.

Compared to American textbooks, French textbooks appear quite short, averaging around four hundred pages in length. Despite their reductive and somewhat cursory presentation of the Algerian War and most other significant historical moments, French textbooks attempt to cultivate critical thinking skills in students who must engage with the documentary record to determine the causal relationships linking historical events. All textbooks surveyed emphasize the Algerian War with respect to de Gaulle’s return to power and the subsequent transition from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic in France. McCormack notes that the war is never studied in its own right but rather in curricular units on the Fourth and Fifth Republics, de Gaulle’s presidency, and decolonization (2007, 58; 2011, 1134). From this perspective, American textbooks offer a chronological approach to history whereas French textbooks attempt to organize history around a specific set of learning outcomes outlined in the State curriculum. In his study of textbooks from the 1990s and early 2000s, Jo McCormack observes that changes in instruction and textbook content reflect a more generalized trend in French national education. Moving away from a factual approach to history, French national education now emphasizes global evolutions (McCormack 2007, 58). The result of such changes has led to the reduction of material specifically on the Algerian War presented in class including videos, documents, and invited guests (primarily veterans) (McCormack 2007, 84). Regardless of the pedagogical approach, students’ lack of knowledge and historical understanding remains a perennial issue discussed in the scholarship of teaching and learning on both sides of the Atlantic. Reiterating the deficiencies of classroom instruction, McCormack writes, “[t]here is little understanding on the part of pupils if their knowledge comes from the classroom. Furthermore even if points are mentioned in class there is some loss from teacher to pupil” (2007, 89).

If knowledge is lost during the teacher-student transmission process, students might look for answers in the one “official” source at their disposal: the class textbook. In a postcolonial and globalized world, the nationalist history textbook is problematic because it identifies the “nation”—an imaginary construct defined according to the whims of textbook publishers—as the pivotal axis around which identity is meant to form. Moreover these texts “offer students no practice in applying their understanding of the past to present concerns, hence no basis for thinking rationally about anything in the future” (Loewen 2007, 301). One reason why French textbooks are not successful at encouraging a global and continuous understanding of national history, meaning one that is positioned within the larger continuum of world history, is that they put forward hagiographic depictions of historical figures and, in so doing, fail to highlight the inherent complexities of transnational events. Due to such depictions and the insistence on iconic images and materials, students exit historical narrative and enter the realm of national mythology.

Textbooks generally present the Algerian War so as to explain decolonization and France’s transition from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic. Discussions about the war therefore serve to contextualize de Gaulle’s return to power in 1958. It should be noted that some textbooks present de Gaulle in ambivalent terms and minimally engage with the various sides of historical controversies. Lambin et al., for example, question the politics behind his “je vous ai compris” [I have understood you] speech delivered in Algiers on June 4, 1958. The authors ask: what exactly did de Gaulle understand and was his address purposefully vague? Instead of sparking controversy and dispelling Gaullist myths, Lambin et al. tersely summarize conflicting interpretations, leaving the reader’s questions unanswered. “Sur ce point,” they conclude, “le débat reste entier” [on this point, the debate remains unresolved] (2008, 298).

De Gaulle appears to dominate pages devoted to the Algerian War in Lambin et al. and in other textbooks studied here. De Gaulle’s presence coupled with ambiguous portrayals of de Gaulle as a national hero reflects three significant trends among textbook writers. Firstly, history textbooks offer up a national discourse whose purpose is to promote a national identity centered on positive aspects of a nation’s history. As a chief component of one of Althusser’s Ideological State Apparatuses, textbooks ensure the maintenance and transmission of dominant discourses that take root in the classroom before spreading outwards. It follows that textbooks would not likely promote narratives that could destroy the foundations of national metanarratives. Historian Sandrine Lemaire offers valuable insight into this question:

De tous les outils, les manuels scolaires restent un des vecteurs primordiaux—pas le seul, mais encore un des plus utilisés. Ils reflètent les initiatives et les grandes lignes qui viennent d'en haut, par le biais des instructions officielles et autres documents d'accompagnement des programmes. . . . C'est pourquoi les manuels, parce qu'ils sont les instruments de propagation d'une idée pour des générations, constituent pour les historiens une des meilleures sources quant aux messages étatiques et aux grandes tendances idéologiques du temps. Offrant une synthèse des discours, ils incitent à un voyage au cœur du consensus national, y compris de ses mystifications. (2006, 99)

[Of all the tools, textbooks remain one of the primary vectors—not the only one, but still one of the most widely used. They reflect the initiatives and directions that come from above, via official instructions and other accompanying documents regarding curricula. For historians this is why textbooks, because they have been instruments for the dissemination of ideas for generations, constitute one of the best sources for State discourses and major ideological tendencies of their time. Offering a synthesis of discourses, textbooks encourage readers to journey into the heart of national consensus, including into the heart of its mystifications.]

This is not to say that histories running parallel to institutionalized versions of national history are always excluded in favor of overtly nationalist representations. If this were the case, then left-wing politicians and the public would not have vehemently contested article 4 of the February 23, 2005 law that would have required French textbook publishers to herald the positive effects of French colonialism particularly in North Africa. Initially passed by the French National Assembly, the law was later repealed. Despite the outrage that surrounded this moment of national “perjury” (or perhaps “purging” is a more appropriate term), other examples of historical omission or manipulation go relatively unnoticed. One notable example is the reductive narrative that most textbooks reserve for the Harki whose postwar existence is discussed in the most equivocal of terms. Falaize et al., mentioned above, represent an important exception. Textbooks do not explain the deplorable conditions of Harki internment camps and the deliberate abandonment of Harki soldiers in Algeria. This is one way in which national history is manipulated so as to avoid highlighting a particularly egregious violation of human rights while still maintaining a small acknowledgment of imperfections of the national past.

Publishers must use editorial judgment before proposing textbooks to teachers and school administrators. These decisions take into consideration publication costs, the target audience's reading level, and State-imposed requirements among numerous other factors. Jo McCormack further mentions, “for commercial reasons, the content of textbooks is heavily influenced by the desire to offer a book that helps pupils to prepare for [the baccalaureate exam]” (2007, 65). All textbooks have lacunae. What I want to argue here is that while French textbooks continue to revise and hopefully improve their representation of national history, this representation inevitably bears the trace of current national discourses and recent developments in world and national politics (see, for example, McCormack 2007, 80–81). Consequently, textbooks should be viewed as one narrativized version of national history among many, one that contends with other historical narratives. In the interest of forging a national identity, textbooks and traditional classroom instruction constitute “a memory of sorts” (McCormack 2007, 81), one that ultimately minimizes minority and community memories so as to provide a stronger basis for social cohesion.

Operating within the bounds of textbook conventions and existing as narratives that tell a good story, nationalist history textbooks require a central protagonist or hero to solidify and lead the nation. Continuing with the second trend among textbook writers, the textbooks surveyed here erect de Gaulle as a national hero responsible for saving and renewing the Republic during a period of severe national crisis. In his opening chapter, Loewen broaches the topic of heroification that he describes as a “degenerative process (much like calcification)” (2007, 11). Heroification is problematic because this process distorts the biographies of notable historical figures like Charles de Gaulle so that their ideological nuances are disregarded. One of Loewen's examples is Woodrow Wilson described in American textbooks as politically progressive. Despite the more memorable moments of his presidency such as leading the United States into World War I and later establishing the League of Nations, Wilson's antidemocratic policies, notably racial segregation within the federal government and questionable military interventions abroad, remain important yet often undisclosed aspects of his political career. This incomplete depiction makes Wilson a prime example of textbook heroification of national figures. To quote Loewen: “Textbooks typically fail to show the interrelationship between the hero and the people. By giving credit to the hero, authors tell less than half of the story” (2007, 16). Even though French publishers attempt to find a balanced representation of France's most celebrated national hero, their resulting ambivalence serves to reinforce de Gaulle's already mythologized status in French metanarratives rather than to deconstruct it. How many French citizens, for example, recognize that de Gaulle came to power in 1958 via a military coup rather than a democratic process? By recycling photographs, political cartoons, and passages from de Gaulle's speeches, textbooks place de Gaulle—not the past or future of France's colonial empire—at the epicenter of the Franco-Algerian conflict. The disproportionate emphasis on de Gaulle allows textbooks to overlook other significant but difficult to discuss people like Maurice Papon who does not figure in sections on the Algerian War in the textbooks studied here. Papon was a senior official in Bordeaux, where he authorized the deportation of nearly 1600 Jews during World War II, and later in Paris. He is responsible for the October 17, 1961 and February 8, 1962 massacres.

In his study of history textbooks published in the 1990s and early 2000s, Jo McCormack states that de Gaulle and his politico-military career constitute the core of contemporary French history. They are often studied to the detriment of other historical figures and events (McCormack 2007, 86). Since recent textbook editions continue to stress de Gaulle's importance with respect to the nation, we can conclude that this particular version of national history has been transmitted to French high school students for at least two decades. Textbook revisions examined in my book are a direct result of newly defined themes such as "Le rapport des sociétés à leur passé" [Societies' Relationship with Their Past] and of the elimination and/or addition of various documents (primary sources).

The focus on de Gaulle therefore reflects a major constituent of the State-mandated history curriculum. Moving on to the third trend among textbook writers, French textbooks are required to emphasize de Gaulle's importance with respect to the Algerian War because this emphasis delineates a historical continuum between past and present, moving from World War II to the Fifth Republic and beyond. According to the most recent curricular revisions (2012 for *terminale*), history courses and their textbooks must outline a clear evolution between past and present without resorting to presentism. One unit entitled "Le rapport des sociétés à leur passé" proposes a historical reading of collective memory so as to demonstrate how historians engage with memory while maintaining the "proper" distance. Intended to elucidate students on the process of writing history, this unit emphasizes the historiographer's primary areas of interest:

d'abord l'histoire des conflits eux-mêmes avec affinement progressif de la recherche qui met en lumière des faits d'abord occultés, y compris dans le travail des historiens; ensuite la dénonciation du processus d'occultation et la mise en lumière de ses enjeux dont les apports peuvent être repris dans le débat public; enfin, dans les contributions les plus récentes, la prise de distance avec les excès du débat public. ("Histoire Terminale ES, L" 2012)

[firstly, the history of the conflicts themselves while progressively refining research that sheds light on once concealed facts, including the work of historians; next, the exposure of the concealment process and the revealing of the stakes of this process whose contributions can be taken up in public debates; finally, in the most recent contributions, the distancing of the excesses of public debates.]

The main student-learning outcome that French high school teachers in *terminale* are to address in the classroom is the mastery of the three aforementioned tasks: (1) the promotion of a national identity centered on positive aspects of the nation's history; (2) the heroification of national historical figures (not a direct objective, but certainly one that results from the first outcome); and (3) the clear delineation of a historical continuum from past to present. To do so efficiently, the State recommends approaching this learning outcome from one of two angles. Teachers are given the choice to present the relationship between historians and the French collective memory of World War II or of the Algerian War. Laurent Wirth, who presided over the 2012 curricular changes, explains that although the relationship between history and memory of World War II does not constitute a new addition to the 2012 *Programme*, the optional focus on the Algerian War does (2012, 105). Throughout this unit, teachers and their students are to identify the effects of current memory wars related to one of these conflicts, to map the evolution of the memories of various communities, and to explore how historians historicize these memories.

The Ministry of Education also suggests that teachers consult critical histories to better prepare this unit and even offers regular summer training programs for educators. The Ministry has made electronic ancillary materials available on its Éduscol website. Among the recommended texts for the Algerian War are Stora's *La gangrène et l'oubli* and Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora's *La guerre d'Algérie, 1954–2004, la fin de l'amnésie* [The Algerian War, 1954–2004, the End of Amnesia]. These publications are considered academic watersheds. *La gangrène et l'oubli* was the first study to demonstrate that the memory of the Algerian War had been occluded—not forgotten—in contemporary French society. Harbi and Stora's collective volume brings together twenty-five historians who represent different nationalities, generations, and ethnicities and were asked to reflect on historical knowledge of the war nearly fifty years after it began. The first publication focuses on memory while the second attempts to transition France and Algeria from memory ("dynamic," "unstable") to history ("static," "stabilized").

The reference to Stora's work in particular indicates that the State is not looking to transmit a war narrative that dismisses France's violation of human rights nor the divisive nature of the conflict with respect to France's past and present. Regarding recent curricular modifications, Wirth notes that "[l]'honneur d'une démocratie comme la nôtre est de savoir regarder son passé en face, non dans une démarche de repentance . . . mais dans un souci de vérité, d'intelligence et de savoir" [the honor of a democracy like ours is to know how to look the past in the face, not for the sake of repentance, but rather of truth, intelligence, and knowledge] (2012, 109). Given the inviolability of pedagogical freedom, it could be argued that an educator's self-limitations constitute the main obstacle to student learning. Loewen indicates that even in the United States "[t]he information is all there, in the secondary literature, but has not made its way into our textbooks, educational media, or teacher-training programs, and therefore hasn't reached our schools" (2007, 303).



Critical texts like Stora's are recommended secondary sources for educators; they are not cited in textbooks as further reading for students. If some editions of the French textbooks studied here lack references to seminal secondary sources, it should be noted that newer editions (those in accordance with the 2012 *Programme*) do not. On the opening pages of chapter 2 ("L'historien et les mémoires" [The Historian and Memories]) in the new Nathan edition for *terminale* L-ES, the authors, Sébastien Cote et al., offer students parallel chronologies that demonstrate the evolution of French collective memory with respect to both World War II and the Algerian War. The publication of significant critical histories such as Stora's *La gangrène et l'oubli* and Robert Paxton's *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940–1944* constitute key moments on these memory timelines. While neither significantly highlighted nor included in an end-of-text bibliography, these passing references are nevertheless available to students and educators looking to supplement classroom instruction. In strict opposition to the American "encyclopedic" approach to teaching national history with longer textbooks coming out each year, the French propose a relatively reductive perspective whose purpose is to teach students how to think critically and historically.

As tertiary sources, French and American textbooks benefit from the use of ancillary materials (primary and secondary sources) selected by teachers and administrators. Sandrine Lemaire has demonstrated that teachers are not trained to find the most appropriate materials: "Certes, les enseignants ne sont pas obligés de transmettre le message émis dans les ouvrages scolaires: ils sont libres de construire leurs cours comme ils l'entendent et de fournir aux élèves tous matériaux de réflexion qu'ils jugent utiles. Encore faut-il qu'ils soient sensibilisés à cette approche" [While teachers are not required to disseminate messages written in textbooks, they are free to develop their courses as they see fit and to provide students with any useful ancillary materials. However, they must first be made aware that such an approach is suitable] (2006, 104). Consequently, the amount of information presented in France, while not as copious as in U.S. schools, can lack complexity and important historical nuances, especially for France's increasingly multicultural youth. Lemaire writes,

[d]ans un tel contexte, les jeunes Français ayant des ascendants issus de l'immigration ou des outre-mer, qui ne trouvent pas de facteurs explicatifs à leur présence en France bien qu'ils soient confrontés en priorité aux discriminations, cherchent ailleurs des réponses au sentiment ou à la réalité qu'ils subissent. Ainsi, certains en viennent à alimenter les fantasmes de la société française en se coulant dans le rôle de "sauvageons" qu'on leur assigne. Par conviction ou par réaction, d'autres expriment leur nostalgie du colonial ou développent une posture de défense face à la "menace" qu'incarne l'Autre. (2011, 66)

[in this context, French adolescents of immigrant or overseas heritage, who cannot find explanations as to why they are in France even though they are first and foremost victims of discrimination, look elsewhere for answers for the feelings and reality they face. Consequently, some fall prey to French fantasies by playing the role of the "wild child" that has been assigned to them. Others, through their own convictions or reactions, express a certain colonial nostalgia or develop a defensive position when confronted with the "threat" that the Other embodies.]

To the "types" of adolescents Lemaire identifies here, I would add the descendants of other memory communities such as the Pieds-Noirs. These individuals are important to highlight given that several cartoonists studied in this book come from Pied-Noir families. All individuals coming from a postcolonial subject position must learn to reconcile their marginalized identity with the idea of a French national identity that institutionalized education endeavors to impress upon them.

The curriculum for *terminale* centers on how the memory of the Algerian War has been instrumentalized and politicized by various groups on both sides of the Mediterranean. Cote et al., for example, explore how the war is presented in Algerian textbooks, and in so doing they indirectly call attention to the biases inherent in French textbook representations of transnational history. French students are encouraged to reflect on why the war is presented differently in Algeria and thus on how or why national history is written. Students are not given the opportunity to understand specific details: why the Algerian War was so violent, why torture was implemented and later amnestied, why the North African community and Islam have since become targets in the mass media. According to Stora, "[l]a guerre d'Algérie ne peut se comprendre que si on la 'prend' en amont, c'est-à-dire un siècle et demi d'histoire auparavant. Sinon, elle reste incompréhensible dans sa dureté, sa cruauté, ses engrenages" [the Algerian War can only be understood if we "catch it" upstream, meaning a century and a half before. Otherwise, the war's harshness, cruelty, and cycles remain incomprehensible] (2006, 61). Lemaire puts forth a similar critique: "les manuels scolaires n'abordent pas encore suffisamment la complexité du phénomène et évitent le lien avec l'histoire nationale, comme si l'histoire coloniale était à la marge du récit national, comme périphérique" (textbooks do not sufficiently address this phenomenon's [colonial history's] complexity and avoid discussing its relationship to national history, as if colonial history were on the margins of national discourse, as if it were peripheral) (2011, 57). For Stora and Lemaire, French textbooks have made incredible leaps and bounds when it comes to their presentation of the Algerian War and to their engagement with the history/memory dialectic. There is, however, room for improvement when it comes to the contextualization of the war within French colonial history and, more importantly, when it comes to the humanization of the war's actors and victims.

Students in *première* have been learning about the history of colonization and decolonization since at least 2003. Their textbooks have sections that clearly explain the evolution of colonial mentalities including the aesthetics of glorification and Orientalism as well as the denunciation of the colonial enterprise and human exploitation. There are unfortunately no *rappels* or reminders in *terminale*-level textbooks that refer back to these discussions. Given that students in France are required to purchase textbooks—contrary to students in the United States who generally borrow their school’s textbooks for one academic year—, one could argue that French students are free to consult all textbooks used throughout their high school education, especially when they are preparing for the baccalaureate exam. However, I have not found evidence that students systematically consult their old textbooks.

While newer textbook editions certainly resolve some of the issues outlined in Stora’s and Lemaire’s research, comics have the added advantage of broaching one area of concern that remains on the periphery of history textbook narrative: how can educators humanize the war—or, to quote Lemaire, how can they rewrite or represent this “histoire ‘déshumanisée’” [“dehumanized” history] (2011, 63)? Should emotions be kept at bay when teaching such a recent and highly traumatic event whose consequences continue to influence French contemporary society in terms of immigration, anti-Muslim sentiment, racial discrimination, and international and domestic politics? In the next chapter, I examine the ways in which comics successfully humanize the history of colonization and the Algerian War and therefore address one of the major shortcomings of French history textbooks.

## NOTE

1. This expression comes from an educational center in Poitou-Charentes whose publication series, “La BD de case en classe” [Comics from Panel to Classroom], explains how to teach polarizing topics like the Holocaust and major French military conflicts through comics.

## Chapter 2

# Historical Narrative, French Colonial Culture, and Comics

The primary goal of recent programmatic changes to the national history curriculum is to mold students into self-conscious citizens rather than repositories of factual information. In *Collective Memory*, Jo McCormack often highlights the “civic objective” of the French history curriculum whose role is to facilitate the integration of students into adult society and to sustain social cohesion. Historian Marc Ferro applauds the ability of contemporary students in France to “approach documents . . . rather than merely memorize dates and events” (1984, 362). He does, however, call for a new direction in history pedagogy, one that takes into consideration the present and the past as well as integrates various methodologies—the social sciences and, I would argue, humanities and the arts—into the teaching of history. Only then will students acquire a “better methodology of comprehension” (Ferro 1984, 363). The comics studied here promote such a methodology and can be used in conjunction with textbooks proposed by scholastic publishers.

These comics cite or recycle authentic textual and iconographic source material documenting the French colonization of Algeria, the Algerian War, and their repercussions on various communities. For this reason, they represent a valuable resource to history teachers looking to supplement textbooks and classroom instruction. Teachers, at least those who find time in an already saturated academic year, sometimes supplement course discussion with films, memoirs, and novels. But comics offer new ways to bring students into direct contact with the documentary record that are not possible in other media. While comics are included among a teacher’s arsenal of pedagogical materials—for example, to teach children how to read—teachers and secondary school students remain skeptical concerning their content and usage in class. The comic book’s relatively short length nevertheless appears ideal in the face of severe time constraints. Writing about the depiction of nineteenth-century colonial expansion in comics, Fanch Juteau argues that comics can be valuable assets to history education: “La valeur didactique réelle de ces bandes dessinées n’est sans doute pas dans la perception que peuvent en avoir les différents lecteurs. Elle serait davantage dans l’usage didactique qui peut en être fait. Mais à condition de la prendre comme telle, et en qualité d’illustration” [The real educational value of these comics is probably not in the perception that different readers may have of them. It is more in how they can be used didactically (as teaching tools), and provided that we take their educational worth at face value and only as an example] (2001, 88). Morvandiau describes his comic book in similar terms: “my historical references seem solid and the intent is very clear” (Miller 2011, 120). The historical comics analyzed throughout *the current volume* meet the same bibliographic standards as school textbooks in their preference for critical histories and documentary images (see chapters 3 and 4) and would make a logical addition to the French history curriculum. Comics scholar Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle believes that comics are effective pedagogical tools because they imitate textbook reliance on iconic images (1986, 72–73). Yet comics do not merely “imitate” textbook use of iconic images. The marrying of word and image creates two levels of narration: one that is “immediate” and literal, and a second that is “subliminal” (Witek 1989, 20). The verbal text can “reinforce, contrast, or even contradict” the visual text and vice versa (Witek 1989, 20). The comics selected for this study play with these levels of narration in order to contest the republican consensus that textbooks actively reinforce so as not to shock society.

While comics foreground national history, historical representation as a trend in comics became popular in France beginning in the early 1980s (Castagna and Silvert 1990–91, 42). Of course history and politics have always been fair game in comics as a quick survey of the *Tintin* albums demonstrates (McKinney 2008, 4). Published from 1929 until 1976, Hergé’s<sup>1</sup> famous series broaches twentieth-century issues ranging from Bolshevik Russia to the colonization of sub-Saharan Africa. Comics scholar Bart Beaty highlights the significance of this series for the development of European comics. He writes, “[i]n the 1920s . . . Hergé’s *Tintin* series . . . made [its] debut, extending the popularity of comics to a broad public” (Beaty 2007, 21). The interrelationship between comics and history suggests that comics can be read both as historical texts

whose objective is to transmit knowledge of the past and as cultural byproducts that allow scholars to retrace the evolution of public opinion. Fabienne Castagna and Anne Silvert argue, “[l]’enseignement de l’Histoire peut faire appel à la bande dessinée non pas tant comme moyen de mettre l’Histoire en images mais comme témoin privilégié d’une époque, d’une mentalité, d’une idéologie” [the teaching of History can call on comics not as a way to draw History, but as a privileged witness of an era, a mentality, an ideology] (1990–1991, 53). From this perspective, comics on the Algerian War are more revealing of the period during which they were published than of the 1950s and 1960s when the war actually occurred. Fanch Juteau agrees: “la Bande Dessinée lorsqu’elle fait l’objet de travaux universitaires, est plus fréquemment étudiée sous l’angle sociologique” [comics when they are the subject of university research, are most often studied from a sociological perspective] (2001, 87).

Interestingly, comics of major historical or market importance were not published during the war. The first book-length publication appeared in 1982 (Vidal and Bignon’s *Une éducation algérienne* [An Algerian Education]).<sup>2</sup> After this seminal album, French cartoonists began focusing on the Algerian War in order to respond to a perceived neglect of this period in French national history. Moreover, French cartoonists advertise their reliance on critical histories and period iconography in an attempt to confer a measure of verisimilitude and representational accuracy on their albums. Historical figures such as Charles de Gaulle, Albert Camus, Guy Mollet, Messali Hadj, and Jean-Marie Le Pen make cameo appearances alongside fictional characters participating in documented events. Contrary to textbooks, these publications often include detailed bibliographies of works consulted during the creative process. While these comics are historical due to their recycling of textual and iconographic source material and to the historical context of their fictionalized narratives, the articulation of differing perspectives over time might suggest that they are products more so than producers of discourse. If cartoonists attempt to teach the history of the Algerian War, their historical perspectives strongly mimic trends in both war historiography and public opinion. Readers should therefore avoid extolling or even downplaying the merits of French comics and their frequent (though sometimes muffled) antimilitarism, anticolonialism, and quasi-utopianism. After all, these tendencies are related to how the war has been remembered, historicized, and taught in France.

What I consider to be the first noteworthy comic book on the war, Vidal and Bignon’s *Une éducation algérienne*, constitutes a good example of how the war was being remembered in France from the 1960s until the early 1980s. The album’s publication date, 1982, coincides with the publication of the first French critical history of the war, Bernard Droz and Évelyne Levert’s *Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie* [History of the Algerian War]. Whereas Vidal and Bignon may have been aware of this critical text, their comic book better reflects the period of war historiography in France that Benjamin Stora has labeled “témoignages et autobiographies” [testimonies and autobiographies] (2005, 55). Because privately printed works authored by soldiers and Pieds-Noirs dominate this period (1962–1981), it is not surprising that war comics follow suit. Witness accounts and autobiographical narratives depicting the war and French Algeria would continue to dominate war comics published in France and Belgium throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. The seemingly irreconcilable tension created in these albums between historical and personal narratives stresses the fact that the Algerian War remains a part of France’s recent past, one that the French have yet to fully assimilate into their national history. French history teacher Oswald Sarrio estimates that “en ce qui concerne la guerre d’Algérie . . . il faudra encore quelques années pour que les débats soient dépassionnés et pour qu’on puisse vraiment évoquer ces questions-là sereinement” [concerning the Algerian War, it will take several more years before debates cool down and we can really discuss these issues calmly] (2011, 134).

The personal nature of *Une éducation algérienne*, *Là-bas* [Over There], *Dans l’ombre de Charonne* [In Charonne’s Shadow], *D’Algérie* [From/Of Algeria], and other comics suggests that certain sectors of the population are dissatisfied with official discourses despite the fact that the war has entered the public sphere. Examples of these population pockets include individuals and communities who engage in the practice of self-othering such as Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, Algerian immigrants, and soldiers, and who have not yet reconciled their wartime activities with France’s republican ideals. Until France and Algeria are several generations removed from this historical period, discussions will remain focused on the war’s history/memory dialectic and, more importantly, on victimology.

By victimology, I am referring to Stora’s assessment of public debates on the war:

les pieds-noirs s’estiment victimes du général de Gaulle, les soldats se considèrent comme ayant été entraînés dans un engrenage cruel, les officiers croient en la trahison des politiques, les Algériens se voient en victimes des Français, les harkis vivent leur situation comme une trahison des autorités françaises . . . Une sorte de cloisonnement, de communautarisation du souvenir par une position victimaire, s’est installée dans une compétition du statut de la meilleure victime. À partir de là, les différents groupes de mémoire, déjà à la périphérie de la société, ne demandent pas à l’État ou aux responsables politiques de rendre des comptes, mais le demandent à l’autre communauté. (2006, 66)

[the Pieds-Noirs consider themselves General de Gaulle’s victims, soldiers see themselves as having been drawn into a vicious cycle, officers

believe to have been betrayed by politicians, Algerians see themselves as victims of the French, the Harkis experience their situation as a betrayal on the part of the French authorities . . . A kind of partitioning or segregation of memory based on a victim mentality has anchored itself in a competition for the title of best victim. As a result, different memory groups, which are already marginalized, are not asking that the State or its political leaders be held accountable; instead they're asking that other memory communities be held accountable.<sup>3]</sup>

From this perspective, the predominance of personal narratives in war comics could be interpreted as reflecting the victim mentality of groups for which the war created or exacerbated marginalization, feelings of betrayal, alienation, and additional layers of trauma. It should come as no surprise that cartoonists studied here belong to or identify with marginalized memory communities. The emphasis placed on personal postmemories framed within the context of national history and collective memory allows readers to simultaneously classify these albums as historical documents situating the history of marginalized communities within French metanarratives and as documents of history reflecting the colonial past. Pied-Noir, soldier, and immigrant cartoonist recycle mainstream historical documents so as to insert their marginalized memories and histories into national history and collective memory.

In many ways, their stories are the result of French colonial culture. According to historians Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Sandrine Lemaire, contemporary racial tensions and the unpopularity of American postcolonial studies in France<sup>4</sup> are direct consequences of French colonial culture. These phenomena stem from France's desire to eradicate difference in favor of a unified Republic. National recognition of an individual's right to difference or communitarianism is perceived as a threat to the solidity of a national and republican identity. "French colonial culture" refers to the omnipresence of the colonial domain in French society. The purpose of Blanchard, Bancel, and Lemaire's research is to demonstrate how colonial ideology permeates French cultural production, not as propaganda, but as a cultural expectation, a *fait culturel*. They argue that the constructed visual memory of colonization has resulted in the transmission of a colonial heritage through cultural production about, rather than knowledge of, France's colonies. France's perceived notions about the colonies are not entirely fashioned by government propaganda—there are of course numerous ways in which ideologies of dominance are enforced in all cultures. Blanchard, Bancel, and Lemaire situate the emergence of French colonial culture during the Third Republic throughout which World's Fairs and Colonial Expositions<sup>5</sup> grew in popularity. Representations of France's colonies and colonial Others continue to persist today in advertising, popular culture, literature, and film.

Blanchard, Bancel, and Lemaire find iconography to be particularly problematic in that it caricatures otherness. A prominent example is the Banania figure. The image that appears on the containers of the popular chocolate drink depicts a Senegalese soldier. Originally not a caricature, this figure has been reworked overtime transitioning from a relatively realistic portrait to a negatively stylized representation of colonial blackness (complete with a nonmastery of the French language) until eventually a white child replaced this figure. A version of the black figure continues to appear on some Banania product packaging. This newer figure appears cartoony and no longer speaks. Cartoonists working on the Algerian War recycle colonial iconography (including caricatures of otherness) in anticolonialist narratives. The risk is that by re-exposing or further exposing French readers to images that convey symbolic violence, these cartoonists are perpetuating colonial ideology in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Bancel 2005, 83). One could argue, as Mark McKinney has elsewhere (2001, 44–49; 2011a, 195; 2013a, 75–76), that Jacques Ferrandez's fascination with colonial erotica (discussed in chapter 5) re-colonizes Algerian women. By re-appropriating images in their fictional narratives, cartoonists engage readers who are familiar with these images. Their work encourages dialogue about visual representation and its role in colonization as well as in the solidification of postcolonial subjectivity. If postcolonialism examines how we currently understand colonial exchanges, cartoonists like Ferrandez remind (Western) readers that we, as postcolonial subjects, are still drawn to and repulsed by colonial iconography and iconic images of war even after their problems have been identified and their significance deconstructed. While never objective, the comics presented here convey facets of French national history that retain their pedagogical value—especially in the hands of educators who are adept at critically analyzing Orientalist tropes in units on colonialism.

If Blanchard, Bancel, and Lemaire's theorization of colonial culture alerts readers to the relationship between colonial iconography and popular culture, their research specifically targets the usage of colonial-era images in school textbooks. As I explore here and in later chapters, comics mimic textbook representations of the war in France, often re-appropriating problematic images used in schools. While such reification has problematic aspects, the recycling of textbook images has some distinct advantages. It ensures reader familiarity with reproduced images while simultaneously inviting critical interpretations of them. Comics that recycle textbook images are potentially less problematic than textbooks themselves, which attempt to assimilate iconic images into the budding memories of impressionable schoolchildren. Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle criticizes history textbooks because they highlight historical moments that "font image" [create a

picture] (1986, 72). He states, “tout ce qui, à tort ou à raison, est à l’origine de l’imagerie de nos manuels scolaires, continués et comme amplifiés par l’iconographie officielle constitue le noyau autour duquel paraît se constituer le discours historique” [rightly or wrongly, everything that is at the source of our schoolbook imagery, which has been spread and amplified by official iconography, constitutes the core around which historical discourse seems to be constituted] (Fresnault-Deruelle 1986, 72). The addition of comics to units on colonialism and decolonization has the potential to counteract the effects of textbook representations that reduce complex historical moments such as the Algerian War to memorable images like those of the Pied-Noir exodus or presidential visits to Algeria.

Although cartoonists contextualize and encourage critical thinking about iconic photographs, their representation is not limited to such images. Instead, cartoonists use moments that “font image,” or produce a mental image, to create narrative. Starting with iconic images of war, cartoonists propose possible contexts and contemporary reactions to significant events in French national history that have been photographed and later decontextualized in the press and textbooks. One example is Ferrandez’s usage of period newspapers that inform his readers and protagonists about life in Algeria during the war (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3). Ferrandez transforms news into significant events affecting the everyday lives of his characters. Bombings and torture are no longer anonymous occurrences. They happen to individuals with whom readers presumably identify. According to Juteau, students find this aspect of historical comics appealing because “[p]roposer des reconstitutions des ambiances, des scènes de la vie quotidienne, un manuel d’Histoire ne le fait pas ou rarement” [a History textbook doesn’t propose or rarely proposes reconstructions of atmospheres and scenes from daily life] (2001, 87). Viewed from Juteau’s perspective, Ferrandez’s representation re-humanizes a dehumanized history.

In contrast, other critics underscore the need for emotional detachment from historical events in the classroom. Some history teachers agree. Oswald Sarrio, a middle-school history/geography teacher in Seine Saint-Denis, believes it is imperative that history teachers impart a neutral vision of France’s memorial matrix, or what he describes as “une vision des mémoires un peu dépassionnée” (2011, 131), on their students. For him, history surfaces as a form of scientific inquiry characterized by objectivity and the quest for truth, regardless of whom this truth serves. The French government justifies this approach with reference to historiographical conventions: “[la démarche de l’historien] est contingente et provisoire, relative aux sources, aux temps et à la posture de l’historien. Comme telle, elle contient la possibilité de son évolution, voire de sa réfutation” [the historian’s approach is contingent and temporary, based on sources, the times, and the historian’s position. As such, his/her approach has the possibility to develop or contest itself] (“Histoire Terminale ES, L” 2012). Fanch Juteau’s insistence on the problematics of teaching history without emotion reflects Loewen’s claim that “[e]motion is the glue that causes history to stick” (2007, 342). Loewen is referring here to the psychology that links people to traumatic events. When students can recall what they were doing or where they were when an event occurred, they are better able to insert themselves into national history. The resulting mental association between national trauma and a student’s personal life ensures that the student remembers not only the significance of the event in terms of the nation, but also in terms of how the event affected him/her personally.

Which approach is more effective: to engage with “subjective” memory or “objective” history in the classroom? Should educators use human emotion to teach history or should they create distance, become dispassionate? For Sarrio, the role of history teachers is to replicate the work of trained historians: “J’enseigne l’histoire et non pas la mémoire. Indirectement donc, je transmets la mémoire, mais avant tout je fais avec mes élèves un travail d’histoire, si ce n’est d’historien” [I teach history not memory. Although I transmit memory indirectly, I have my students primarily work on history, if not write history] (2011, 131). The historical narratives that arise from Sarrio’s approach (readers can imagine the objective tone with which he attempts to transmit national history to his students in lecture) unquestionably include the linguistic conventions described by scholars of American textbooks like Sam Wineburg: no metadiscourse and no discernable author. Even in the United States where debates on how to inject life back into historical narrative abound, Wineburg discovered that writing a balanced narrative, one in which passions are present yet controlled, remains a difficult task for educators.

During a workshop, Wineburg asked American history teachers to compare representations of the American economy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries found in a commonly used textbook (considered a tertiary source because it presents information taken from secondary sources) and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich’s *A Midwife’s Tale* (a secondary source based on the author’s reading of primary sources). Despite the fact that Wineburg is discussing the history of colonial America, his observations are applicable to the teaching of history in France. His teacher participants agreed that Ulrich’s text offered more with respect to the writing of history as a process. In addition to putting readers in direct contact with primary sources (diary excerpts



written by a midwife who lived from 1735 until 1812) and thus the historical evidence that led Ulrich to draw various conclusions, this text gives readers access to Ulrich the historian. Ulrich's style breathes life into the history she narrates. Rather than remain a distant, invisible writer, Ulrich engages readers on a personal level: "We [the teacher participants] found it impossible to learn about Martha Ballard [the midwife] without learning about Laurel Thatcher Ulrich" (Wineburg 2001, 14). Through Ulrich's narrative, readers learn about the work of historians, about what Ulrich had to accomplish in order to finish her book.

When asked to rewrite the same history, Wineburg's participants were unable to recreate the kind of narrative proposed in Ulrich's book. Most found themselves reproducing the dry textbook narratives with which they were so familiar: narrated in the third person with an eye for historical objectivity. No clear epistemological shift occurred in their retelling of history. Wineburg's study indicates that for educators, textbook narrative is "not *one* way of transmitting the story of the past, but the *only* way" (Wineburg 2001, 17, his emphasis). The act of authorial self-effacement is not an effective way to engage students, as Wineburg's workshop experience proves. Why must authorial subjectivity, an important discursive quality of primary and secondary sources, be excluded from tertiary sources? Wineburg's empirical evidence in favor of greater subjectivity in historical narratives supports new approaches to teaching history, approaches that help students understand how historians make sense of the documentary record and how they insert themselves as citizens into the nation's historical continuum. As tertiary sources that engage with both primary and secondary sources, comics could reproduce the historical "objectivity" of textbooks. Yet, as Juteau demonstrates, they do not. Why?

To answer this central question, I now turn to Hayden White's analysis of narrative discourse and historical representation in *The Content of the Form*. According to White, the form historical discourse takes (chronological versus narrative) does not influence discursive content. He argues, "what distinguishes 'historical' from 'fictional' stories is first and foremost their content, rather than their form" (1987, 27). Regarding content, historical stories refer to the real while fictional stories refer to the imaginary. This does not mean that historians cannot narrativize the real and that they are obligated to transmit knowledge without telling a story. From Wineburg's perspective, Ulrich's narrative form facilitates the transmission of historical knowledge in a way that chronologies or less personalized narratives do not. As for White, "narrative should be considered less as a form of representation than as a manner of speaking about events" (1987, 2). Historical narrative such as that found in comics can therefore be an effective means of transmitting history despite the medium's sometimes denigrated mode of representation. Compared with the mode favored by textbook publishers, comics offer an alternative perspective on national history, one that students and other readers are better able to assimilate into their existing knowledge base on account of the narrator's and even cartoonist's visibility within narrative. White suggests, however, that the narrativization of real events remains problematic due to the fact that real events do not lend themselves to the act of storytelling. Narrative and, with it, the presence of a narrator, allow readers to reconcile the imaginary with the real. It is the implicit nature of narrative that infers the presence of the imaginary, even when its foundations are found in the real. When confronted with narrative, readers tend to interpret historical representation as fictional or, at the very least, loosely based on actual events. Regardless of their potentially problematic fictionalization of historical moments, which can make readers suspicious of narrative content, stories provide coherency and establish well-defined causal relationships between events. It is these qualities in particular that facilitate readers' understanding and assimilation of knowledge via narrative.

Like textbooks, comics are meant to communicate historical narratives to children and adolescents. Nevertheless, publishers like Dargaud and Casterman market comics to large, diverse audiences that include children and adults. As such they can be used to stimulate adult interest in historical subjects as well as to introduce children to areas of historical inquiry. The medium can be used to motivate difficult-to-reach students who are marginally interested in school textbooks. For this purpose, the *Centre Régional de Documentation Pédagogique de Poitou-Charentes* [Poitou-Charentes Regional Center for Pedagogical Documentation] (CRDP) proposes a series of pedagogical materials on how to best exploit comics in the classroom entitled *La BD de case en classe* [Comics from Panel to Classroom]. The center's website posits that the "BD est un outil de recherche et d'information tous publics et sans équivalent offrant aux bédéphiles, enseignants de toutes disciplines, des possibilités de recherche multicritères exceptionnelles" [comic book represents an unparalleled research and information tool for all audiences, one that provides comics enthusiasts and teachers in all subject areas exceptional multicriteria possibilities for research] (L@BD n.d.). The center has published several texts including *Vasco ou comment faire de l'histoire au collège* [Vasco or How to Do History in Middle School] (1998), *BD et Citoyenneté* [Comics and Citizenship] (2002), *Dessiner l'indicible autour d'"Auschwitz"* [Drawing the Unspeakable with respect to "Auschwitz"] (2005), and, central to our discussion on the Algerian War, François Righi's *La guerre d'Algérie avec "Azrayen"* [The Algerian War with



“Azrayen”] (2003). Righi’s presentation of *Azrayen*’ offers detailed analyses of select pages and emphasizes “le rapport entre la fiction et la réalité historique permettant à l’élève d’avoir une vraie démarche historique sur un support attrayant” [the relationship between fiction and historical reality, allowing the student to develop a historical approach using an attractive medium] (Cyberlibrairie du CRDP). Each chapter closes with student activities and questions for discussion.

Righi’s commentaries aid in the comprehension of the Algerian War and comic book conventions that Lax and Giroud use to communicate a localized history of the war to readers. The goal of this pedagogical text is to teach the war in an unconventional manner and to introduce unsuspecting students to a dark chapter of their national past. One aspect that Righi highlights is the existence of liminal or *frontalier* figures such as Messonnier and Taklhit (defined in the introduction and discussed in chapter 5): “Au-delà de tous les manichéismes, [Lax et Giroud] démontre[nt] que les liens d’amitié et de solidarité s’étaient créés entre les pieds-noirs et les Algériens” [Above and beyond all Manichean dichotomies, Lax and Giroud demonstrate that the bonds of friendship and solidarity had been created between Pieds-Noirs and Algerians] (2003, 11). Because most French textbooks published before the 2012 curricular changes cover the war in two to six pages, there is little room to develop the war’s complexities like the deconstruction of binary oppositions. If several textbooks define terms like “Harki” and “Pied-Noir,” they rarely enter into the specific circumstances or the diversity of circumstances surrounding each memory community. This holds true even for post-2012 publications.

Fictional narratives such as *Azrayen*’ and *Carnets d’Orient* contextualize events and communities for students so that they can visualize and better comprehend the stakes of Algerian independence for individuals and the nation. With each successive generation, the war recedes further into the past. If history textbooks provide an abridged and dehumanized war history, comics explore the relationship between national history and local or individual memories of the war. Through a close reading of historical comics, students are invited to reconsider the decontextualized historical documents studied in class so that data regarding, for example, the number of casualties and displaced populations become more tangible. Comics also underscore the different interpretations that can arise from various types of narratives.



**Figure 2.1** Taous and Cosme's reunion and final conversation. *Source:* From Frank Giroud and Lax, *Azrayen*’ (Paris: Dupuis Aire Libre, 2008), p. 92. © Dupuis.

In one instance, Righi describes the unexpected friendship that develops between Cosme Tirard, a Pied-Noir raised with Algerians who later enlists in the French army as an intelligence officer, and Taous Yacine, a *mujahida* [female FLN combatant]. During their search for their lost comrades, the search patrol comes across an FLN-orchestrated massacre of an Algerian village thought to support Messali Hadj’s MNA. The villagers who were absent during the massacre captured a *mujahida* abandoned by her brothers-in-arms. French soldiers rescue the injured woman for questioning. Taous quickly recognizes Cosme from her childhood. “Tu . . . tu ne te rappelles pas? Les Quais de Bougie! N-nos . . . nos parties de cache-cache avec Mouloud et Jacquot” [You . . . you don’t remember? The Bougie docks! O-our . . . our games of hide-and-seek with Mouloud and Jacquot] she asks (Giroud and Lax 2008, 91). During their exchange, Taous explains the antagonism dividing Algerians and her personal connection to Cosme. Their conversation serves to illuminate readers about the war’s many facets and to remind Cosme of his personal history, specifically of why he joined the French army. In addition to deconstructing binary oppositions, this scene describes the complicated bonds uniting Algerian-born individuals. Instead of assassinating Cosme, her political enemy, during the previous day’s ambush, the *mujahida* chose to spare his life. Rather than torture the FLN combatant to obtain information about her organization, Cosme provides physical comfort to his childhood companion. Lax visually transcribes the emotion of this scene as well as Cosme’s compassion for Taous. Cosme offers her water from his canteen while gently supporting her head and shoulders (Figure 2.1). The recent massacre of innocent civilians nevertheless overshadows this touching moment, leaving the reader to question categorical distinctions emphasized in official representations of the war, like those he/she might find in textbooks.

Righi’s emphatic presentation of *Azrayen*’ should not suggest that this album is unique with respect to its pedagogical potential. In 2007, Jean-Pierre Tusseau published a brief survey of twenty children’s books about

the war accessible to children in *collège* [middle school]. His survey includes several comics studied throughout this book such as Jacques Ferrandez's *La guerre fantôme* and *Rue de la Bombe* [Bomb Street], Guy Vidal and Alain Bignon's *Une éducation algérienne*, and, not surprisingly, *Azrayen*. Tusseau's lack of distinction between adults' and children's comics limits the utility of his study. Still, his work does suggest that children are reading these texts, and that schoolteachers are using them to teach history to children and adolescents. This is partly because of the accessibility of such comic books to younger students. For historical taboos like the Algerian War, comics offer a point of entry. The reductive nature of comics (reductive because the medium traditionally contains a limited number of pages when compared to the novel) invites students to research and discuss historical allusions at home and in school—more so than textbooks. The general aesthetics of comics with their colorful pages are attractive to younger students who have yet to fully assimilate the importance of France's written culture. Although the war is taught in both *collège* and *lycée* [high school], textbooks scarcely scratch the surface of Franco-Algerian history. And how can they given the amount of material covered at these levels? The superficial presentation of French colonial history in middle school and high school textbooks does not encourage students to examine this period critically once they reach high school, unless their teachers adopt a more proactive approach: "Mis en condition par leurs années d'école et de collège, les élèves sont prêts, au lycée, à accepter sans le moindre esprit critique . . . la version tronquée, expurgée et globalement propre de la guerre d'Algérie. À condition, naturellement, que l'enseignant la prenne comme objet d'étude" [Conditioned by their years in primary and middle school, students are ready in high school to accept a truncated version of the Algerian War, censored and generally clean, without thinking critically about it. Provided, of course, that their teacher chooses it as a topic of study] (Maschino 2001, 21).

Étienne Augris is one teacher who is especially committed to studying the war, to problematizing how the war has been studied and historicized, and to encouraging critical thinking. Augris contacted me in November 2009 about contributing to his class blog. Entitled "Une histoire commune?" [A Shared History?], his project aims to initiate dialogue between French and Tunisian high school students. Claude Gellé's sister school is the *Lycée français* [French High School] in Tunis.<sup>6</sup> Students are required to post and comment on each other's assignments that examine the shared histories of France and North Africa. Augris' personal interest in comics motivated him to incorporate representations of the war in popular culture into his lessons. Remembering how much he enjoyed reading comics in his youth, Augris believed that his teenaged students would enjoy an unconventional approach to history, one grounded in nonacademic material. While the primary objective of his blog project is to teach students about the decolonization of North Africa, Augris and his French colleague in Tunisia hope to show students how governments on both sides of the Mediterranean have re-appropriated colonial history and decolonization for political gain as well as how freely colonial and postcolonial discourses have entered into various forms of culture. Rather than simply prepare students for the baccalaureate exam, Augris strives to sharpen their ability to think critically about history so that they may challenge founding mythologies such as French republicanism and France's civilizing mission abroad.

When questioned about teacher and student perspectives on the pedagogical potential of comics, Augris stated that it is frowned upon because the medium continues to suffer from its paraliterary status. School librarians remain open, however, to the acquisition of comics for their collections and ask teachers for recommendations. Augris and his colleagues persist in their attempts to incorporate the medium into lessons without limiting usage to units on the Algerian War. For instance, Hergé's *Tintin au Congo* [Tintin in the Congo] published in 1931 and therefore from "an older colonial context" (McKinney 2008c, 5) is widely used to demonstrate how colonial racism has permeated diverse aspects of cultural production. Although Augris does not associate his reliance on visual media with Blanchard, Bancel, and Lemaire's notion of colonial culture that criticizes the use of colonial iconography to teach French students about the colonies, some of his classroom discussions center on the recycling of Orientalist tropes in contemporary modes of representation and how recycling can function as criticism. Besides interviewing Pascal Blanchard and me for his blog, Augris interviewed Jacques Ferrandez about his *Carnets d'Orient* in order to familiarize himself and his students with critical and authorial perspectives. In 2008, several of his students authored a blog project exploring the representation of French Algeria in Ferrandez's series.

Despite such efforts, teachers wishing to use comics to teach history must overcome certain obstacles. Choosing comics that are appropriate for the classroom can be quite difficult. Augris emphasizes that comics must not be overly serious or didactic in their approach to national history. The point of using this medium is to provide a relatively entertaining alternative to school textbooks, one that allows students to grasp historical abstractions with greater ease. Yet by selecting albums that match these criteria, teachers paradoxically risk abating student interest in the contribution of popular culture to historical debates. According to Augris, his students do not always welcome activities based on comics because they appear frivolous and do not serve in exam preparation. The same problem applies to nontextbook sources in the U.S. used to prepare students for

AP exams. Augris stated in an e-mail, “[i]n their mind, [comics are] associated with humor and frivolity. Paradoxically, I know that I have to find those ingredients in [comics] to arouse their interest.” Augris noticed that when he described a comic book as “pretty funny,” his students were more likely to read it regardless of the album’s graphic and narrative qualities.

Despite student objections to studying nonexam material, Augris asked his students to develop a project on the Algerian War over the course of several months. During the 2009–2010 academic year, he did not require the completion of similar projects on other historical events or periods. For Augris, the war retains its strongly polemical character in French society and therefore necessitates further exploration beyond the parameters of the present history curriculum. Because the war is so pivotal to national and postcolonial identities, a detailed presentation of the war invites exploring divergent perspectives that are often excluded from classroom discussions but remain foundational for the development of a civic consciousness. This is one of Jo McCormack’s central arguments: “the Algerian War’s place in the program, and therefore in history classes, does not reflect its historical or memorial importance” (2007, 67). The Algerian War and Franco-Maghrebi relations were the focus of Augris’ 2009–2010 history blog, which was based almost entirely on independent student projects. His efforts to generate transnational or cross-cultural dialogue underscore the importance of globalizing history for students, of moving away from nationalistic accounts, and of decentering antiquated colonial narratives. Augris’ preference for comics suggests that he believes comics serve an analogous purpose.

Augris maintains that incorporating comics into any lesson is challenging due to time constraints. As a result, he relegates discussions of comics to his blog and special activities. In May 2009, Augris invited Laurent Galandon and A. Dan who published *Tahya El-Djazaïr* [Long Live Algeria] to meet with his class outside of regular school hours. Prior to their visit, Galandon and Dan submitted several pages from the series’ first volume published in June 2009. Students were required to read these pages and prepare questions for discussion. During the first part of their visit, the cartoonists presented their project and answered student questions about the creative process. Later that same morning, Galandon and Dan organized a hands-on workshop during which students were asked to create a storyboard not to exceed one comic book page. Augris posted several videos on his blog in which Galandon and Dan propose comic book panels based on student ideas. One group, for instance, adapted a scene from Yasmina Khadra’s novel, *Ce que le jour doit à la nuit* [What the Day Owes the Night], which takes place in Algeria from the 1930s up until 1962. This novel examines the increasingly complex relationships uniting (and later dividing) Algeria’s indigenous and Pied-Noir communities. Although the workshop was interesting and highly interactive, its preparation was costly and complicated from an administrative standpoint. The class blog resolves such issues by allowing students and teachers to interact outside of class and to interview cartoonists and other specialists without disrupting class time or draining financial resources available to school districts.

Augris’ blog project and use of comics in his history classroom are notable exceptions and are not representative of most French teachers. While Augris bemoans his students’ utilitarian mentality dictating their disinterest in non-exam material, McCormack discovered during his field research that many teachers cater to student demands so that their students are better prepared for national exams like the baccalaureate. Their students are therefore not better prepared to think critically about history. Survey research on the use of nontraditional and nontextbook sources is sorely needed to better contextualize Augris’ experiences and the value of using comics in the history classroom. Based on conversations with Augris, comics and other nontraditional sources are often ignored in favor of school textbooks that focus on potential exam material. By discarding unconventional sources such as comics, literature, film, and music, teachers fail to communicate to their students how instrumental these works have been in determining public opinion, in re-contextualizing iconic images, in questioning founding mythologies, and in reflecting trends in national historiography.

Should history teachers be held accountable? Sandrine Lemaire believes that while teachers are not obligated to teach directly from their schoolbooks, they must first be conditioned to accept new postcolonial approaches to history, as was shown to be difficult for American teachers. She writes: “même si, depuis 2004, certains manuels n’hésitent plus à rendre compte des avancées de la recherche historique . . . , les enseignants manquent d’éléments pour sortir des discours qui les ont eux-mêmes formés” [even though certain textbooks no longer hesitate to summarize advances in historical research since 2004, teachers lack the tools necessary to discard the discourses that were foundational for their own training] (Lemaire 2006, 104). Lemaire’s commentary implies that the postcolonial paradox affects national education and the transmission of historical knowledge in addition to cultural production about specific historical events and the relationship between Self and Other. While comics do not propose an immediate solution to these problems, their representations of the Algerian War and choice of source material allow this paradox to be clearly identified and defined, thereby inviting interesting and new perspectives on both the war and Franco-Algerian history.

As examples of postcolonial cultural production, comics studied in this book also offer critical perspectives

on the deficiencies of France's educational system. Interestingly, classroom scenes in which cartoonists depict the cultural assimilation of France's cultural Other are common in comics on the Algerian War. In their album, *Quand ils avaient mon âge: Alger 1954–1962* [When They Were My Age: Algiers 1954–1962], Hélène Lasserre and Gilles Bonotiaux actively represent life in Algiers on the eve of Algerian independence. The four child protagonists, each from different memory communities, continue their normal activities such as attending school despite ensuing conflicts. The only Arab character who lives in the Casbah (the citadel of Algiers surrounded by the city's oldest (and Arab) neighborhoods) and who comes from a pro-independence family is portrayed as a particularly strong student. In the narrative's first classroom scene, Youssef is pictured reciting one of Théophile Gautier's poems to the class. Gautier is a French Orientalist poet and novelist. Although the narrative voice-over explains that neither Youssef nor his classmates could visualize the winter landscapes described in Gautier's poetry, the fact that Youssef and not Pied-Noir children is reciting a poem from the French canon demonstrates the "successes" of France's civilizing mission. In the next panel, the teacher explains this mission to his students: "Il est du devoir de la République d'apporter aux autres peuples l'instruction pour tous, le développement économique et l'idéal de liberté et d'égalité qui font les grandes nations" [It's the Republic's duty to make available to other peoples education for all, economic development, and the ideals of liberty and equality that are the foundations of great nations] (Lasserre and Bonotiaux 2002, n.p.). Youssef's perfect recitation of Gautier coupled with his proficiency in arithmetic reiterates the idea that France contributed to the development of the native Algerian population, that colonization was not entirely negative. Lasserre and Bonotiaux's representation hesitates between colonialist and anticolonialist perspectives. After touting the successful implementation of the French educational system in Algeria, the cartoonists underline the impertinence of this system that sought to teach Arab and Berber children about "their" Gallic ancestors, about a cultural patrimony to which they did not have access, and about historical and geographic knowledge that was irrelevant to their Algerian reality. The cartoonists fail to mention that only a small percentage of the native population had access to institutionalized education in French Algeria.

Azouz Begag and Djillali Defali further emphasize unequal access to colonial education in their appropriately titled comic book, *Leçons coloniales* [Colonial Lessons]. Set in Setif in 1945, the album narrates the experience of a young female teacher, Marie Delmas, newly appointed to a position in French Algeria. While Begag and Defali's album is noteworthy due to their focus on moments of the Algerian War that took place prior to November 1, 1954, and which are only depicted in one of the seven pre-*Programme* 2012 textbooks surveyed above (Falaize et al. 2008), Marie quickly becomes an emblematic figure of how the civilizing mission could have proceeded. Despite her Pied-Noir heritage and the racist tendencies associated with this community (read: the majority of the album's Pied-Noir characters), Marie actively attempts to bring the civilizing mission to fruition via the creation of mixed-race schools in French Algeria that grant equal access to education regardless of race, ethnicity, creed, or gender. Soon after her arrival, Marie meets Amor, a young Muslim Algerian with a strong desire to learn. Not officially admitted, he spends his afternoons directly outside the classroom until Marie discovers his presence and invites him to join the rest of her students. This seemingly small gesture becomes the foundation of Marie's personal mission as an educator in French Algeria. In subsequent panel sequences, she travels to nearby villages looking for school-age children and encouraging parents to enroll them in her school. Algerians, who sons died for France in World War II, and Pieds-Noirs, who wish to maintain the proper distance between their children and the native population, openly reject Marie's vision of education. Marie nevertheless persists, teaching Pied-Noir children Arabic and continuing her efforts to attract Muslims to her classroom. Her efforts reflect her father's efforts who was also a teacher in Setif prior to his death: "À côté de la ferme des lauriers blancs, [son père] avait le projet de construire une école Emir Abdelkader pour les chrétiens, les juifs et les musulmans" [Next to the white laurel farm, her father had the project to build an Emir Abd-el-Kader school for Christians, Jews, and Muslims] (Begag and Defali 2012, 24). Slowly, Muslim students begin coming to class.

If the children do not recognize prevailing discriminatory attitudes and are happy to make new friends at school, their parents and employers (Amor's, for example) would rather refuse these children access to education than place them together. Amor's employer removes him forcefully from class just as Gaston's father (a Pied-Noir) interrupts a lesson to take his son home. Much to Marie's dismay, soon all Pied-Noir parents take their children out of school: "Mais . . . vous ne pouvez pas faire ça! J'applique la loi française, pour le bien de tous!" [But . . . you can't do this! I am applying French law, for the common good!] (Begag and Defali 2012, 44). The actions that take place at school mirror the eruption of violence in town, which affects the children, their families, and Marie. At the album's close, Marie's return to France foreshadows the Pied-Noir exodus just as Amor and Fatma's desire for a better life in America foreshadows new beginnings for the Algerian people. Interestingly, Amor and Fatma bring along one of Marie's books, given as a gift: "J'ai l'atlas géographique. Avec les livres, Fatma, on peut aller n'importe où dans le monde . . . Sans jamais se perdre" [I

have the geographical atlas. With books, Fatma, we can go anywhere in the world. . . . Without ever getting lost] (Begag and Defali 2012, 71–72). Begag and Defali’s final emphasis on textbooks and learning underscores that France’s civilizing mission—despite its corruption, at times inappropriateness, and obvious failures—benefited those Algerians who had access to education. Instead of using the French language and their knowledge of French culture to better appreciate and accept the French colonizing mission in Africa, historian Alice Conklin states that some students used this knowledge to challenge French authority (1997, 138). Colonial schools in Algeria and elsewhere inherently gave birth to an indigenous elite who strategically turned the French republican rhetoric against itself, threatening and later overthrowing the colonial regime.

Another representation of the inappropriateness of France’s civilizing mission in Algeria appears in Jacques Ferrandez’s adaptation of Albert Camus’ short story, “L’hôte” [The Guest]. If one could argue that minor and sometimes major changes are an inevitable part of the adaptation process, one particular modification reveals the way in which Ferrandez positions himself ideologically with respect to Camus nearly fifty years later. The introductory pages of the comic book visualize a typical school day prior to the events of Camus’ narrative. Daru, a Pied-Noir schoolteacher, is shown teaching Kabyle children about French geography, specifically major rivers whose names the children obediently recite back to their teacher. “Kabyle” refers to a Berber ethnic group indigenous to the Kabylia region in Northern Algeria. At the end of the day, Daru distributes sacks of wheat to his pupils so that their families may survive the drought. From a postcolonial standpoint, these additions, while merely hinted at in Camus’ narrative yet directly represented in Ferrandez’s, suggest two possible interpretations. On the one hand, the initial pages indicate that Daru is not only responsible for his pupils’ intellectual edification, but also for meeting their biological needs. Ferrandez depicts Daru feeding his students both figuratively and literally. Since their parents are visually absent, Daru also assumes a paternal role for these children who later disappear into the desolate plateau surrounding the school. Viewed from this perspective, Daru appears to faithfully embody France’s civilizing mission: he is the white colonizer who supplies the indigenous population with the tools necessary for survival and cultural evolution. On the other hand, these pages indicate the special relationship between colonizers and colonized. In Albert Memmi’s depiction of colonized peoples, he emphasizes the imposed cultural amnesia to which they are seemingly condemned. Algerian children educated in French schools inevitably learn about their “*ancêtres les Gaulois*” [ancestors, the Gauls] and other cultural impertinencies so as to become assimilated subjects, rather than naturalized citizens, of Greater France. Regarding the colonized, Memmi writes: “la mémoire qu’on lui constitue n’est sûrement pas celle de son peuple. L’histoire qu’on lui apprend n’est pas la sienne. . . . Les livres l’entretiennent d’un univers qui ne rappelle en rien le sien” [the memory that one constitutes for him/her is certainly not that of his/her people. The history that he/she is taught is not his/her own. Books lead him/her into a universe that in no way resembles his/her universe] (1985, 123). Perhaps to reiterate Memmi’s critique of the intimate relationship between colonialism and education, Ferrandez begins his adaptation with a French geography lesson in rural Algeria. The focus of Daru’s lesson, French waterways, not only underscores the inappropriateness of France’s civilizing mission—especially once the reader learns that Daru’s pupils and their families are nearly starving due to a lack of water—it accentuates the “définitive dualité” [definitive duality] created and maintained by the French educational system in the colonies (Memmi 1985, 123). Historian Fanny Colonna argues that French schools established in colonial Algeria never intended to create French citizens. Excellence in school in Algeria was not based on scholarly or even moral criteria. Rather, it was founded on what she calls the “principle of the proper distance” between the dominant and native cultures (Colonna 1997, 353). Algerians were expected to undergo neither too much acculturation nor too little.

Comic book insistence of French educational irrelevancies with respect to France’s colonies reiterates academic research on colonial education such as Conklin’s and Colonna’s. The medium’s representation also hints at problems inherent to any educational system. Despite intentions to deliver an objective and distanced approach to history, educators are limited by their prejudices, sometimes blind acceptance of national metanarratives, and even administrative pressures whose purpose is to maintain a strict adherence to State-mandated curricula to keep more conservative parents at bay. Therein lies the extremely precarious or capricious nature of how historical knowledge is transmitted to subsequent generations. Similar to Étienne Augris, Sandrine Lemaire believes that “[r]estituer une *histoire commune* sans parti pris, ni critique, ni nostalgique, mais qui relate la participation de chacun, telle qu’elle fut, à la construction de la nation paraît être un des outils essentiels à l’évolution de l’école dans le champ du post-colonial” [the reconstitution of a *shared history* free from bias, criticism, and nostalgia, one that openly and honestly recounts everyone’s participation in the constitution of the nation seems to be a necessary tool for the evolution of education within a postcolonial framework] (2011, 68, her emphasis). In the remaining chapters, I analyze the specific narrative strategies found in comics that demonstrate the medium’s potential to transmit Augris’ and Lemaire’s vision of a shared history to readers.

## NOTES

1. Hergé is the pen name for Belgian cartoonist Georges Remi (1907–1983).
2. Mark McKinney mentions the existence of earlier semiautobiographical French comic books published in the early 1960s: *Journal d'un embastillé* [Diary of a Bastille Prisoner] and *Journal d'un suspect* [Diary of a Suspect] published in 1962 and 1964, respectively. He indicates that these comic books were “[m]arginal in audience size and extreme in political orientation” and that “they are probably the first published comic books about the Algerian War” (2013a, 155). Regarding *Une éducation algérienne*, he writes: “it was not until 1982, twenty years after the war’s conclusion, that the first book-length, uncensored, and open treatment of the Algerian War appeared in mainstream French comics, in *Une éducation algérienne* [An Algerian Education], scripted by Vidal (1939–2002), drawn by Alain Bignon (1947–2003), and published by Dargaud (France)” (McKinney 2013a, 155–57). McKinney also cites Jean-François Douvry’s 1983 article, “La Bande dessinée et la guerre d’Algérie” (2013a, 145–46) in which the author catalogs French comics in which the Algerian War appears. Due to its availability and thematic content, I consider *Une éducation algérienne* to be the first historically significant comic book on the Algerian War.
3. For a detailed analysis of colonial victimology, see Esther Benbassa’s article “La concurrence des victimes.”
4. See, for example, Jean-Loup Amselle’s *L’Occident décroché. Enquêtes sur les postcolonialismes*, Jean-François Bayart’s *Les études postcoloniales: Un carnaval académique*, and Marie-Claire Smouts’ edited volume *La situation postcoloniale: Les postcolonial studies dans le débat français*.
5. Chapters 2 and 3 of Mark McKinney’s *The Colonial Heritage of French Comics* focus specifically on the representation of colonial exhibitions in French comics. Chapter 2 studies early representations particularly in the 1930s; chapter 3 looks at the renewed interest in colonial exhibitions, a subject recently taken on by contemporary cartoonists.
6. Initially, Augris launched this project with two Algerian high school classes: one taught by an Algerian teacher who later withdrew his participation because of time constraints and inadequate computer resources, and one taught by a French woman living in Algeria (Stéphanie Carrier). Carrier told me that she later moved to Tunisia, where she currently resides and teaches history and geography at the *Lycée français* [French high school]. Her contribution to the blog centers on the role of women (in particular, marriage customs and the Islamic veil) in the Mediterranean basin. She does not incorporate comics into her lessons due to their general unavailability in Tunisian bookstores.



### Chapter 3

## Packaging History for Mass Consumption

In the opening pages of *Packaging Post/Coloniality*, Richard Watts argues: “In the act of beginning, speakers, writers, and producers of all manner of texts situate themselves or have themselves situated in a particular discursive field. Introductions announce the content, form, and register of the forthcoming text, all of which helps the receiver of the text decode it” (2005, 1). Due to the liminal status of comics in terms of literary production—meaning that comics exist on the periphery of literary culture—, Richard Watts’s well-articulated study of the “packaging” of postcolonial Francophone literature (also on the periphery with respect to French literature) provides a theoretical framework for the discussion of comic book paratext. The comics examined throughout *the current volume* have been selected on account of their thematic and (re)presentational similarities. How these albums are presented to the French reading public is as important as how they represent the history of the Algerian War. Due to the medium’s paraliterary and commodity status when compared to the novel and auteur cinema, cartoonists wishing to validate their representation of history and see their albums classified as historical comics rely on promotional and commercial strategies in the packaging of their product. While packaging is an important component in the marketing of any product of consumption, it is particularly relevant to the popularization of discourse.

Based on his reading of Genette’s *Seuils* [“Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation” (Jane E. Lewin’s translation)], Watts engages with the idea that a text’s paratext determines or influences both readership and interpretation. Due to their inclusion of various paratextual elements, comics actively in search of validation as historical narratives such as those selected for this study, can best be described as hybrid cultural artifacts, “like all books caught between the competing imperatives of the text and the paratext” (Watts 2005, 10). Genette’s seminal study of literary paratext emphasizes its place in terms of its production and how it functions with respect to the literary text. Watts focuses on the paratext’s role once the book leaves the production phase and enters the economy as an object of consumption. Although Watts’s study centers on the political dialogue between text and paratext during the colonial, revolutionary, and postcolonial periods, his analysis of the paratext and how it relates to Francophone literature is relevant to the study of historical comics in that it provides a theoretical framework from which readers can view comic book paratext for a specific subset of comics.

The paratext, while not providing a political discourse for comics, acts as a cultural mediator, one that determines why comics should be read and why their representation of history should be taken seriously. In this chapter, I focus on paratextual elements that are commonly found in comics on the Algerian War. The most visible element is the historical endorsement. This can take the form of forewords authored by noted historians like Benjamin Stora. Forewords are not the only way in which cartoonists can validate their representation of history. Other elements with a similar function are bibliographies, personal testimonies, reproduced historical documents such as press clippings, photographs, television stills, and radio broadcasts that enter the diegetic realm, dedications to other artists working in the field who have become celebrities in their own right (e.g., Anne Sibran and Tronchet’s acknowledgment of Jacques Ferrandez at the beginning of *Là-bas*), and authorial texts, which detail the archival and field research conducted to make a comic book. While not all comics in which the Algerian War is represented use these strategies, this study is interested in those that do. My aim is to comparatively analyze scholastic and “popular” representations of the war that target the French reading public in general and educators and school-age adolescents in particular. In the specific case of historical comics, the various elements highlighted in this chapter serve to authenticate comics’ historical narrative and validate their mode of representation. To recontextualize a passage from *Packaging Post/Coloniality*, the paratext serves to mediate works “whose status in the French literary institution was and remains a source of tension” (Watts 2005, 3). Although Watts is referring here to Francophone texts, his comment remains relevant to other works whose literary status creates tension. Reminiscent of the center/periphery argument with respect to French canonical and Francophone literatures, comics as a

paraliterary and popular genre recreates the center/periphery dialectic when compared to other media, notably canonical fiction and cinema. Readers unfamiliar with these texts, considered “foreign” in the realm of French literature, require mediation, a key to decoding their principal mode of representation.

Watts’s analysis and its implications for my book raise questions about genre and representational authority. What establishes authority in publications that require mediation, the text or the paratext? To whom does the reader attribute authority, the cartoonist or the endorser/sources? Is there a hierarchy implicit in the various types of paratext: are certain paratextual elements more influential than others? Finally, how are historical comics that lack “authenticating” paratext received? Is their circulation and distribution considerably limited compared to comics with authenticating paratext? While some comics have smaller print runs than others and are more difficult to find, albums that incorporate authenticating paratextual elements enjoy greater visibility on the book and comic book market leading to more library acquisitions and critical readings of these texts. As a result, these comics and their accompanying paratext make a significant contribution to the constitution of a French collective memory on the Algerian War. Publications such as Ferrandez’s *Carnets d’Orient* and Frank Giroud and Christian Lax’s *Azrayen* have remained in circulation and have even benefited from new editions. While the popularity of these two series can be partially attributed to the renown of their cartoonists, their seriousness of purpose is not a function of Ferrandez’s or Lax and Giroud’s celebrity status within comic book circles. If the Algerian War has successfully infiltrated French cultural production, what do comics as cultural artifacts contribute to current debates on the war and to the constitution of a French collective memory of the war?

From Richard Watts’s perspective, the paratext serves as a cultural mediator/translator for a largely metropolitan readership of Francophone literatures and thus as an instrument of control, dictating how such literatures should be read and understood. Paratext also functions as a necessary marketing strategy that ensures the book’s circulation and proper distribution (Watts 2005, 18). Given the market considerations for comics, an object that is relatively costly to produce and therefore costly for the consumer, the paratextual elements of historical comics allow readers to judge the historical and entertainment value of various albums prior to purchase. The diversity of paratextual elements found in comics studied here confirms Watts’s assertion that “the ‘text itself’ is a virtual construct; no one ever reads just the text itself. The reader’s experience is always mediated by the paratext, which registers and transmits the cultural specificity of the work and the moment of its reception” (2005, 14). In order to better understand how different types of paratext function in this subset of comics, this chapter examines common elements used to validate a cartoonist’s representation of history. Subsequent chapters will return to paratext when I discuss the representation of the colonial Other (chapter 5) and colonial landscapes (chapter 6).

Representations of the Algerian War flourished with the artistic maturity of second-generation artists, specifically those with little or no memory of the war like Anne Sibran, Jacques Ferrandez, Frank Giroud, Farid Boudjellal, Morvandiau, and Didier Daeninckx. For this reason, their creative process depends on the exploitation of historical and family documents. Morvandiau commented on his creative process during an interview with Ann Miller:

Just like the researchers in the human sciences whose work I drew on when I was searching for documents (from Pierre Bourdieu to Germaine Tillion, and including numerous historians), I wanted above all to be very clear with myself and my readers about who I am and where I’m speaking from. I tried to link my personal involvement, the work of memory within my family, and established historical facts, with the detachment needed for understanding. (2011, 118)

Whether or not their comics are purely historical, the war furnishes a huge amount of material for verbal and visual content; for example, Marc Garanger’s private collection of war photographs exceeds ten thousand images. Several comics studied here contain well-developed paratextual, intertextual, and metafictional elements whose presence was a determining factor in the constitution of my corpus. The addition of paratextual material serves to historically contextualize narrative, provide evidence for an album’s historical claims, highlight the contribution of popular culture to the constitution of a collective war memory, and to establish a continuum between comics and contemporary war historiography. While readers remain acutely aware of these comics as fictional representations of the Algerian War, artists invite them to consider the wider implications of comics as a viable producer and product of discourse. In this chapter, I assess the significance of specific extra-diegetic material included in comics on the Algerian War to determine how cartoonists exploit these raw materials to shape narrative and produce new historical discourses. Particular emphasis is placed on the inclusion of components whose purpose is to authenticate historical and biographical comics, specifically prefaces, forewords, and afterwords. Only upon close examination of such materials can important aspects of the creative process be understood.

While the inclusion of supplementary material functions to orient the reader toward one specific interpretation, its purpose may also be to ensure an album’s historical accuracy. Textual material in this

category includes paratextual elements whose purpose, according to Gérard Genette, is to produce a discourse on the ensuing or preceding text (1987, 150). The cartoonist often writes the preface and/or afterword in order to delineate the album's evolution from proposed project to publication and to provide insight into author intentionality. Genette's analysis of the preface and its variations furnishes a suitable model for the study of comic book paratext. Based on Genette's paradigm, the addition of paratextual elements allows comics to cross literary thresholds. Several albums presented here have surpassed their paraliterary status, becoming novels in comic book form. While one cannot ignore the graphic and narrative qualities of comics, comic book paratext plays an important role in reader reception, allowing the historical representation in comics to compete with that found in other media.

Because comics retain their cultural stigma and are often defined by their paraliterary status, the choice of a third party such as a respected historian or prominent literary figure to author a foreword or other included text would result in ameliorating a comic book's reception among readers. Mark McKinney and Bart Beaty have explored this phenomenon elsewhere (McKinney 2013a; Beaty 2007). Building on Beaty's foundational research on academics who intervene in the production of comics, McKinney argues that a historian's professional credentials "can provide cultural capital and legitimation" (2013a, 21); and that these additions provide cartoonists with an opportunity to "announce their intention to intervene in historical debates" (2013a, 20). This is especially important when cartoonists represent polarizing moments of national history (McKinney 2013a, 22). When I asked Jacques Ferrandez about his inclusion of forewords, he answered that they were there to authenticate his historical vision. In his mind, if a prominent scholar or writer pushed the artistic, literary, and historical merits of his series, then it stands to reason that the public would take his contribution to debates on the Algerian War seriously, instead of dismissing his albums as "disposable kiddie fare" (McCloud 2000, 3). All five albums of the *Carnets*' second cycle include forewords contributed by noted historians or Algerian writers: Gilles Kepel (a professor at Paris's Institute of Political Studies), Bruno Étienne (a member of the *Institut Universitaire de France* [University Institute of France]), French historian Michel Pierre, Mohammed Fellag (an Algerian actor and author), and Maïssa Bey (an Algerian writer).<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Stora's foreword to Lax and Giroud's *Azrayen* lends credence to this album's historicity given that Stora is one of the world's leading war historians. The *Carnets* and *Azrayen* forewords invite readers to use these albums as springboards for further historical inquiry and for investigating the relationship between history and memory in a popular medium.

As the first contributor to the *Carnets*' second cycle, Gilles Kepel addresses the series' transition between colonization and decolonization as well as Ferrandez's overall contribution to the target reader's understanding of the war and the Arab world. Kepel's foreword engages not only with the *Carnets* but also with Ferrandez's parallel *Carnets d'Orient* travel series published during the seven years separating the publication of the *Carnets*' first and second cycles. According to Kepel, Ferrandez's inspiration and credibility as a storyteller lies in his passion for and knowledge of Algeria and the Middle East, namely Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, and Iran to which he traveled to produce his travel *Carnets*. As a noted scholar of Arab history and politics, Kepel's testimony serves to guarantee the academic and poetic value of Ferrandez's historical reconstitution. Almost minimizing the value of academic research and historical training, Kepel indicates that Ferrandez and his artistic eye have reached a better understanding of the world and historical events than academics after years of critical inquiry. During a chance encounter with the artist in Lebanon, Kepel experienced the following:

je le vis sortir de son nécessaire de voyage un pinceau et des couleurs et peindre, en quelques minutes, le petit monde qui nous entourait. L'espace d'un instant, l'œil de l'artiste avait déchiffré ce que les connaissances accumulées de l'universitaire avaient mis des années à constituer, la fulgurance de l'homme de pinceau illuminant l'homme de plume pour lui montrer ce qu'il y avait à voir. (2002, 3)

[I saw him take out a brush and some colors from his travel bag and paint the microcosm surrounding us in a few minutes. In the space of an instant, the artist's eye had decoded what the scholar's accumulated knowledge had taken years to put together, the dazzling speed of the painter illuminating the man of letters so as to show him what there was to see.]

Kepel's endorsement of Ferrandez and his work stems from his admiration for the artist's ability to capture the veracity of the world around him more faithfully than a trained historian. While Kepel's foreword to *La guerre fantôme* does not describe the academic rigor implicit in Ferrandez's creative process, which involved the study of critical histories, written testimonies, media coverage, and archival documents, Kepel argues in favor of reading the *Carnets* as a relatively unbiased representation of the Algerian War. Kepel claims that, by traveling throughout the Arab world, Ferrandez gained an insider's perspective, which allowed him to simultaneously and fairly represent multiple viewpoints in his work. Throughout *La guerre fantôme* in which major characters of the second cycle are introduced, Ferrandez equally and impartially emphasizes the perspective of several memory communities. Kepel's foreword inevitably addresses the representation of history in comics. He contends that Ferrandez transforms the medium into a forum for intellectual debate on topics that governments and historical revisionists have often concealed from the public. Due to the "inferior"

literary status of comics, Kepel believes that it is an excellent medium through which historical taboos like the Algerian War can be broached and transmitted to future generations. Ferrandez's work in particular, Kepel notes, efficiently brings together historical research and survivor testimony in order to articulate to those readers who did not experience the war how and why it occurred.

Transmission and remembrance is also the focus of Bruno Étienne's foreword to *Rue de la Bombe* in which Ferrandez illustrates the Battle of Algiers as well as the torture, mutilation, and murder of French and Algerian victims. While describing French and Algerian brutality during the war, Étienne, a scholar of Algerian history, indirectly references scenes from Ferrandez's album in which tempers flare between individuals on the same "side," bombs are detonated in public places, Algerian characters are tortured in French custody, and the FLN retaliates against other Algerians by cutting off their noses and tongues. This album is considerably more violent than the other *Carnets*. While Étienne's presentation does not directly praise Ferrandez and his contribution, it underlines the importance of any contribution in which violence is depicted and condemned rather than forgotten and amnestied. Étienne's foreword highlights an important aspect of Ferrandez's series and, in so doing, endorses the artist's historical vision. In the *Carnets* and, more specifically, *Rue de la Bombe*, Ferrandez's representation of the Algerian War is a response to France's politics of forgetting and amnesty of crimes committed during this period. If Étienne focuses on France and Algeria's failures to transmit a viable collective memory of the war, his foreword expresses hope that researchers and cartoonists like Ferrandez will contribute to liberating both nations from their political and historical biases.

In contrast to Bruno Étienne, Michel Pierre, a historian interested in French colonial history, engages directly with *La fille du Djebel Amour* [The Girl from Djebel Amour] in his praise for Ferrandez's depiction and contextualization of his comic book. Although Pierre presents the album within a specific historical context, the organization of France's Specialized Administrative Sections (SAS), whose purpose was to pacify the local Arab population and promote French Algeria, in late 1950s' Algeria, he stresses the importance of fiction in creating viable memories of the war and in healing wounds. He writes:

Parmi ce qui contribue à ce travail de mémoire, à la lucidité souvent douloureuse qui irrite et avive les plaies mais en permet la guérison, l'œuvre de fiction apparaît essentielle. Il y eut des romans, des films et, depuis quelques années, les bandes dessinées de Jacques Ferrandez. Seuls l'écriture, l'image, le récit parviennent à pénétrer une forme de réalité, à faire saisir la complexité des vies et des engagements, les destins brisés et l'inextricable mélange de croyances antagonistes. (Pierre 2005, 6)

[Among those contributing to this memory work, fiction seems necessary for the often painful clarity that inflames and deepens wounds while allowing them to heal. There have been novels, films, and in recent years, Jacques Ferrandez's comics. Only writing, the image, and narrative succeed in penetrating a form of reality, in grasping the complexity of lives and commitments, blighted fates and the inextricable mixture of antagonistic beliefs.]

Here Pierre underscores France's need to look beyond official commemorations and other similar manifestations in the constitution of a collective war memory. For Pierre, official commemorations like monuments and ceremonies or what Pierre Nora calls "sites of memory" are fixed and resistant to new interpretations. Comics and fiction are not because they create open dialogues with readers about the hegemonic discourses infiltrating official sites of memory. Some comics could therefore be read as examples of Roland Barthes' "writerly" text in which the reader produces rather than consumes meaning.<sup>2</sup>

In *La fille du Djebel Amour*, Ferrandez explores the internecine struggles inherent to both sides of the conflict, namely Algerians recruited for France's SAS, the short-lived public fraternization of Europeans and Arabs in May 1958, and the growing disillusionment of French generals about the preservation of French Algeria. Instead of merely picturing key events, operations, and speeches in comic book form, Ferrandez articulates multiple viewpoints and proposes a polyphonic narrative that delves deeper into the recesses of historical events like de Gaulle's "je vous ai compris" speech. Several main characters are present at de Gaulle's proclamation. While his words of hope literally fill the interpanel spaces or gutter, the real focus is on Octave and Samia's conversation concerning the future of Algeria in which Europeans and Muslims peacefully coexist. Octave and Samia are the central protagonists of the series' second cycle. Octave is a Pied-Noir whose family remains in Algeria. He enters the story after returning from the French Indochina War (1945–1954). Samia is an Arab Algerian and medical student living in Algiers. The fact that Octave and Samia's conversation is interrupted by the unlawful arrest of an Arab, unjustly accused of terrorism, indicates the implausibility of their utopian vision of Algeria. Michel Pierre discusses several of these events, establishing a parallel between his foreword and comic book content. His commentaries provide supplementary background information, which allows the reader to remain in the series' fictional realm and which guarantees that Ferrandez's unconventional representation is grounded in historical accuracy.

The two remaining contributors to the *Carnets* differ significantly from the aforementioned academics. Firstly, Fellag and Maïssa Bey are Algerian and experienced the war as children growing up in Algeria in the 1950s and 1960s. Secondly, they are writers rather than historians whose words center on their lived

experience. Both share glimpses of their childhood with readers, highlighting not only hardships in times of war but also the joys of childhood when racial, religious, and socioeconomic differences scarcely register. Due to their nonacademic standing, Fellag and Bey cannot solidify the series' claims for historical authenticity in the same way as Kepel, Étienne, and Pierre. Yet, speaking as "native" eyewitnesses to this historical period, they accomplish two important tasks. They confirm that the series' presentation of the war is realistic and recognizable to those who lived it. Their endorsement also implies that Ferrandez's perspective is not biased in favor of his Pied-Noir heritage. Bey develops the notion of a shared heritage even further, echoing Étienne's condemnation of violence in her description of the horrors that all people, French and Algerian, were forced to endure.

Perhaps speaking as a novelist concerned with the representation of history in her own work, Bey enumerates the ways in which Ferrandez authenticates his fictional narrative:

Jacques Ferrandez ne prétend pas réécrire l'histoire, même si, tout au long de ses *Carnets*, des documents authentiques, des reproductions des pages des journaux de l'époque attestent de son désir d'inscrire le parcours de ses personnages dans les faits tels qu'ils ont été vécus, au moment où ils ont été vécus, dans le fil des événements. Il restitue, avec le souci de l'exactitude et de la précision du trait qui caractérise toute son œuvre, la part de lumière et la part d'ombre qui se disputent cette terre. (2009, 5)

[Jacques Ferrandez does not claim to rewrite history, even if, all throughout his *Carnets*, authentic documents and reproductions of contemporary newspaper pages attest to his desire to incorporate his characters' paths in events as they were experienced when they were experienced and in the overall course of events. He reconstructs, with concern for accuracy and the linear precision that characterizes all his work, the light and dark sides that fight over this land.]

Ferrandez's desire for historical accuracy led him to objectively represent a multitude of voices regardless of their political affiliations and ingested discourses, because, to quote Fellag, all voices are embedded in the same "matrice mémorielle" [memorial matrix] (2007, 5). Instead of historically contextualizing album content, Fellag and Bey address the question of why. Why represent the war in comics at all? Similar to Michel Pierre, both suggest that fiction and comics reopen dialogue once removed from the original trauma, resulting in a protective but creative screen. The reader focuses on the paths that each character takes rather than on the number of casualties recorded in official documents, important dates, or the terms of international treaties. Instead, writers and artists offer their stories and designs to facilitate healing, "pour mettre du baume sur 'tout ça'" [to put ointment on "all this"] (Fellag 2007, 5).

Healing requires new ways of viewing the war and its actors. Several of the *Carnets*' episodes offer Ferrandez the opportunity to explore the moral and ethical dilemmas confronting his protagonists, often stand-ins for real individuals. Two of the most prominent examples are Octave and Saïd, who are based on historical personalities: Hélié Denoix de Saint-Marc, a *putschiste* [a member of the generals' coup] and member of the French Resistance during World War II and Saïd Ferdi, a child soldier who alternately fought for both "sides" (the FLN, then France) (Le Saux 2009).<sup>3</sup> If Octave becomes increasingly more antimilitaristic as the series progresses (first in *La guerre fantôme* when faced with the French army's scorched-earth policy and questionable interrogation methods, and later culminating in his defection to Canada in *Dernière demeure* [Final Resting Place]), the evolution of Algeria's political climate forces him to join the generals' coup in *Terre fatale* [Fatal Land]. His decision does not reflect identification with the OAS's political extremism, but rather a tenacious belief in a utopian French Algeria, symbolized by his romantic relationship with Samia. Octave's seemingly radical shift dispels French perceptions of OAS-affiliated Pieds-Noirs, sometimes associated with the far right in contemporary French politics (see chapter 7). His character embodies the moderate Pied-Noir, overshadowed by the more vocal and radical members of the Pied-Noir community in France today.

As the series nears its conclusion, Octave and Saïd find themselves in a bleak situation. In one panel of *Terre fatale*, Ferrandez illustrates a conversation between these two characters about what they should do: continue with the coup or turn themselves in. Octave and Saïd are drawn discussing their situation while sitting in front of an enclosed garden space. The fence bars and panel boundaries together form an impenetrable physical and metaphorical space from which Octave and Saïd have little chance of escaping. Saïd, now a Harki, finds himself in a more complicated predicament than Octave. Despite the fact that the FLN murdered his teacher and father as supposed traitors, Saïd joins the *maquis* [rural guerrilla bands of Algerian resistance fighters] to avoid the same fate. Octave rescues the young boy during an ambush and integrates him into the French army where he then becomes the target of racial discrimination. Saïd's existence problematizes Algeria's nationalist and France's colonial ideologies, which fail to recognize shades of gray. In the last volume of the series, Ferrandez emphasizes his personal rejection of historical models and public opinion that categorize personal choices as either black or white. Saïd, for instance, joins the FLN out of necessity and later joins the anti-Gaullist coup in order to pledge his loyalty to Octave rather than to the OAS.

Saïd's story is not one of political alliances. Ferrandez focuses on this character's coming of age during decolonization. Saïd develops linguistically, progressing from essentially no French in *La guerre fantôme* to



mastery of the French language in *Terre fatale*; physically, first appearing as a young boy and later as a young man; and ideologically, initially unconcerned by the war, he soon realizes that alliances are often arbitrary and not necessarily manifestations of political beliefs. Saïd is last seen in the series after he deserts the army to join a renegade OAS faction. Before leaving, he exclaims: “Je suis plusieurs fois traître, alors maintenant je dois aller jusqu’au bout . . . Moi, je suis perdu! Ça fait longtemps que je le sais!” [I’m a traitor many times over, so now I have to go through with it. . . . I’m done for! I’ve known it for a long time!] (Ferrandez 2009a, 57). Reminiscent of Saïd Ferdi and others like him, Ferrandez’s Saïd faces an uncertain future at the end of the war. As he rushes off, Saïd passes in front of a window where the words “totale liquidation” [total liquidation] are written (Ferrandez 2009a, 57). Although these words reference inventory liquidation resulting from French merchants who closed their businesses and evacuated the country, Octave’s speech balloon as he calls out Saïd’s name is positioned next to the text on the window, visually associating Saïd with death (“liquidation”) (Figure 3.1). If Saïd’s vitality, youth, and humanity should guarantee him a place in Algeria’s future alongside other children of the revolution, the reader and Octave recognize that Saïd’s future has been compromised. As a “traitor,” he is no longer welcome in Algeria; as a colonial subject, he does not belong in metropolitan France despite evidence of his linguistic and cultural assimilation. Through character development, Ferrandez calls attention to the war’s lost generation and asks readers to challenge categorical representations of memory communities.

In addition to soliciting forewords and breathing historical realism into his characters, Ferrandez’s desire to authenticate his representation of history led him to conduct extensive research in France’s colonial archives in Aix-en-Provence and at France’s National Library in Paris. While not all contributors to Ferrandez’s albums discuss the research involved in creating works of fiction in their preliminary remarks, Ferrandez includes detailed bibliographies at the end of each album. Frank Giroud and Lax do the same for *Azrayen*’ as do Morvandiau for *D’Algérie*, Didier Daeninckx and Mako for *Octobre noir* [Black October], and Désirée and Alain Frappier for *Dans l’ombre de Charonne*. Frequently cited in the *Carnets* and *Azrayen*’ series are prominent historians Raphaëlle Branche, Pierre Nora, Benjamin Stora, and Guy Pervillé, war photographers Marc Garanger and Marc Flamand, and journalist Henri Alleg whose seminal text, *La Question* [The Question], denounces the French army’s use of torture in Algeria. Alleg is actually listed as a reader for A. Dan and Galandon’s first volume of *Tahya El-Djazair* in which one of the protagonists is held at the Villa Sesini where she is interrogated, tortured, and raped by French soldiers. This episode’s veracity is substantiated in Alleg’s *La Question* centered on his own experiences in the Barberousse prison in Algiers. In their acknowledgments, the cartoonists write: “Des remerciements particuliers à Henri Alleg (*La Question*, Éditions de Minuit, 1958) pour sa lecture, ses remarques et ses conseils” [Special thanks to Henri Alleg (*La Question*, Éditions de Minuit, 1958), for his reading, comments and suggestions] (Dan and Galandon 2009, n.p.).



Figure 3.1 Saïd’s final appearance in the *Carnets*. Source: *Carnets d’Orient*, vol. 10: *Terre fatale*, Jacques Ferrandez © CASTERMAN S.A.

In addition to providing evidence for album historicity, comic book bibliographies like those found in *Carnets d’Orient*, *Azrayen*’, *D’Algérie*, and *Dans l’ombre de Charonne* among others invite readers to learn more about the war. As if to prove their impartiality, Ferrandez and Lax and Giroud in particular list both Algerian and French sources spanning several decades including controversial publications like Paul Aussaresses’ *Services spéciaux, Algérie 1955–1957* [Special Services, Algeria 1955–1957], which vindicates the French army’s use of torture in Algeria. Ferrandez accentuates the relationship between history, memory, and narrative when he specifies before each album’s bibliography that “[c]e récit, bien qu’imaginaire, est librement inspiré de faits tels qu’ils ont été relatés par les acteurs et les témoins de la guerre d’Algérie, ainsi que par le travail des historiens” [this story, though imaginary, is loosely based on facts as they have been reported by participants and witnesses of the Algerian War, as well as by the work of historians] (2002, 65; 2004, 63; 2005, 63; 2007, 63; 2009a, 63).

If the *Carnets* and *Azrayen*’ forewords highlight the contribution of comics to discourses on the war, they primarily serve informative and recommendatory functions. They provide information on the cartoonists, their project, the albums’ historical context, and whether the albums are worth reading. Presumably a third party would not write a foreword if he/she could not endorse the book. In the case of Fellag and Bey’s forewords to



*Dernière demeure* and *Terre fatale*, respectively, they demonstrate a personal bond between the work and the contributing author. Unless comics are (auto)biographical such as *Guy Gilbert*, *Là-bas*, or *Dans l'ombre de Charonne*, the purpose of prefatory material is not to vouch for absolute verisimilitude. One exception is Benoît Despas and Jean-Marc Kulawik's biographical comic book, *Guy Gilbert*, which includes a foreword contributed by Father Gilbert himself attesting to the album's truthful representation of his life: "Elles sont vraies de bout en bout, ces pages. Oh que oui!" [They are true from end to end, these pages. Oh yes!] (Gilbert 1999, 2). Due to the literary status of comics, the reader would probably be suspicious of claims for absolute truth in a comic book's historical representation. The medium's status thus compels the inclusion of prefaces and forewords in (historical) comics. During our 2009 interview, Philippe Ostermann, a publisher at Dargaud, explained that historical albums endorsed by influential historians typically enjoy better sales. Once the war fades into the background, becoming anecdotal with respect to the plot, the need for preliminary and postliminary texts dissipates. Owing to their historical label, *Carnets d'Orient*, *Azrayen*, *Dans l'ombre de Charonne*, and *Octobre noir* exploit paratextual elements to validate and legitimize their representation of history more so than other comics presented here. It is therefore not surprising that these particular comics include bibliographies of historical, nonfictional, and fictional texts; nor that in comics not marketed as historical such as crime fiction (*Alger la noire* [Black Algiers], *L'Arlésien* [The Man from Arles], *Retour au bercail* [Return to the Fold]), preliminary and postliminary texts are absent.

Although Ferrandez was one of the first cartoonists studied here to include forewords in his comics so as to validate his representation of French Algeria and the Algerian War, others soon followed suit. The historian of choice for album forewords is unquestionably Benjamin Stora. According to his university webpage, Stora is a history professor at the University Paris 13-Villetaneuse and at Paris's Institute of Oriental Civilizations and Languages (INALCO). He specializes in North African history, the wars of decolonization, and Maghrebi immigration in Europe. Stora has published nearly thirty books and was recently awarded the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA) prize in April 2013 for his antiracist activism and scholarly work on Maghrebi contemporary history. He makes frequent television appearances and has a strong radio presence on France Culture ("Benjamin Stora" 2014). Stora is therefore well known and respected in France as a historian, or rather, *the* historian of the Algerian War. Besides his foreword to Lax and Giroud's *Azrayen*, Stora also contributed to Désirée and Alain Frappier's *Dans l'ombre de Charonne* and Didier Daeninckx and Mako's *Octobre noir*. In contrast to Ferrandez's *Carnets d'Orient* and Lax and Giroud's *Azrayen* whose covers do not reference contributors, other albums to which Stora has contributed include this information on their cover. Why include the designation "préface de Benjamin Stora" [foreword by Benjamin Stora] above or below the album's title? In many ways, this marketing strategy confers a level of historical verisimilitude on the albums in question so that readers are able to make an immediate decision regarding their historical value. Some comics like *Dans l'ombre de Charonne* and *Octobre noir* do not rely on the cartoonist's celebrity status in order to sell their publications. They instead rely on Stora's renown as a scholar and public figure for promotion. When Ferrandez started the second cycle of his *Carnets d'Orient* series, he had already received considerable attention from publishers and readers. Ferrandez's notoriety was sufficient to sell his albums. The same can be said of Frank Giroud and Christian Lax who gained attention after the publication of *Les oubliés d'Annam* [The Forgotten Ones of Annam]. To quote Richard Watts, "the epitextual buzz surrounding the publication of the second work of an author whose first work was a huge success will suffice to guarantee its success" (2005, 18). Artistic self-confidence partly explains why other cartoonists such as Manu Larcenet and Farid Boudjellal have opted against the inclusion of allographic contributions in their later publications. Once their reputation has been established, cartoonists are less likely to use name-dropping to market their publications and eliminate allographic forewords or downplay the inclusion of third-party commentary. Another explanation for Larcenet's, Boudjellal's, and other cartoonists' lack of prefatory material is that they do not consider their albums historical. The addition of forewords in historical comics can therefore serve two important functions: forewords can confer a measure of historical authenticity on an album; and they can transform a historical album into a more desirable commodity on the book market if the cartoonist is unknown to comic book connoisseurs.

While Ferrandez and Lax and Giroud create fictional narratives embedded in history, Daeninckx and Mako and Désirée and Alain Frappier focus on lesser known moments of the Algerian War, events that have remained invisible even though the war is more openly discussed in the public sphere. Is it the cartoonists' low profile that necessitates inscribing Stora's name on album covers, or is it the near invisibility of the historical events depicted that require this addition? While Didier Daeninckx is forever associated with October 17, 1961 thanks to the publication of his detective novel, *Meurtres pour mémoire* [Murders for Memory] in 1984, *Octobre noir* is, to my knowledge, the first comic book entirely devoted to the massacre of those peacefully protesting a racist administrative measure, which targeted North Africans living in and around Paris. The

Prefect of Police, Maurice Papon, introduced a curfew from 8:30 pm to 5:30 am “recommended” for Algerian Muslims living and working in Paris and its suburbs. The French Federation of the FLN retorted by organizing a mandatory and peaceful demonstration (no arms permitted) against the curfew on October 17, 1961. Because the Prefecture of Police had not authorized the protest, Papon stationed several thousand policemen, riot police, and gendarmes around subway stations, train stations, and bridges in order to block access to the French capital. Participants, journalists, historians, and eyewitnesses have yet to learn the exact death toll, but estimates are in the hundreds (approximately two hundred to three hundred victims). These numbers do not include Algerians who were wrongly detained and later deported to Algeria, nor do they reflect the lynching of Algerians who failed to respect the recommended curfew prior to the demonstration. In his foreword to *Octobre noir*, Stora weaves Daeninckx and Mako’s fictional narrative into a particularly dark and forgotten chapter of French national history. In addition to contextualizing narrative for readers, Stora attempts to explain why such violence was used against the protestors which included women and children.

In his afterword titled “Fatima pour mémoire” [Fatima for Memory], Didier Daeninckx provides his personal account of the incident that he witnessed when he was eleven or twelve-years old. This foundational moment in the construction of his identity led Daeninckx to research the event and raise public awareness. After publishing an editorial in *Actualités de l’Émigration* [Emigration Current Events] and *L’Humanité* [Humanity] in 1986, he received a letter from Louisa Bédar, sister of Fatima Bédar whose death had been declared a suicide in October 1961. Thanks to Daeninckx’s article and its catalog of names of the missing and deceased, Louisa Bédar learned that her older sister, who was only fifteen years old in 1961, had been the victim of police brutality. Fatima’s photograph included in Daeninckx’s afterword demonstrates that the Paris police used inappropriate force to “control” the protest. The photograph depicts a child’s innocence; the reader first notices Fatima’s long, braided hair and girlish smile as if posing for a school picture. A three-page list of victims (each page contains three columns) provided by Jean-Luc Einaudi, a historian who testified at Papon’s trial in the late 1990s, accompanies the photograph.

These pages coupled with Stora’s foreword inform readers that the violence portrayed in *Octobre noir* is neither fiction nor hyperbole. In the section subtitled “Questions autour des origines du 17 octobre 1961” [Questions on the Origins of October 17, 1961], Stora documents the reasons behind this wave of anti-Algerian violence in 1960s’ France. Instead of representing an isolated moment of violent repression, October 17, 1961 can be read as the culmination of police brutality that began near the outbreak of the Algerian War once the war’s repercussions could be felt on metropolitan French soil.

Stora’s foreword fulfills another important function with respect to *Octobre noir*. Stora begins his foreword with the fictional context of the album centered on members of a young rock band. He later emphasizes the importance of fiction for the constitution of a collective memory:

Le travail de fiction a pris le relais des récits d’histoire, et est venu compléter notre connaissance de cet événement tragique. . . . Par la puissance des images, la remontée de mémoire des eaux noires de l’oubli s’opère dans les jeunes générations issues de l’immigration post-coloniale. Cette bande dessinée forte, émouvante et érudite participe de la transmission mémorielle, essentielle pour comprendre le présent et définir les contours du futur de la société française. (2012, 12)

[Fiction has taken the place of historical narratives and has completed our knowledge of this tragic event. By the power of images, the resurgence of memory from the black waters of oblivion is at work in the young generations of postcolonial immigration. This powerful, moving, and scholarly comic book participates in memory transmission, necessary for understanding the present and for defining the future contours of French society.]

Stora’s concluding remarks highlight the importance of specific paratextual elements like lists and photographs of actual victims when added to works of fiction (comics or other).

Why and how has fiction taken over for historical or nonfictional narratives in the transmission of memory? In her recent study on fictional female testimonies of the Algerian Civil War, literary scholar Névine El Nossery examines the fine line separating fact from fiction, testimony from imagination, and ethics from aesthetics. Reminiscent of Theodor Adorno’s dictum regarding the barbarity of poetry after Auschwitz, El Nossery posits that the trauma inflicted on women during the Algerian Civil War of the 1990s defies testimony, and that the war’s horrors have become ineffable. The very nature of the war surpasses the real: “la guerre civile algérienne remet en doute la capacité de l’écriture à rendre compte de la violence” [the Algerian Civil War calls into question the ability of writing to portray violence] (El Nossery 2012, 9). What happens when the language of eyewitness testimony fails to express the seemingly unreal realities of political trauma? How else can such trauma be represented if not mediated by fiction and the imagination? For El Nossery, the conflation of fact and fiction in certain novels reflects the female writer’s obligation to articulate the shared individual and collective female experience of a history whose official version has been doctored by a totalitarian regime wishing to instill peace through a general amnesty (read: amnesia). Returning to Benjamin Stora’s reflection on fictional narratives, El Nossery’s reading of the contemporary Algerian novel provides a

point of convergence. If the trauma of the Algerian War or chapters of the war, namely October 17, 1961 and February 8, 1962, do not figure in official versions of war history and if the victims of tragedy are unable or unwilling to testify, how can we preserve the memories of these events if not via an imaginative investment in the past, much like Marianne Hirsch's notion of "postmemory"? If the "truth" is too difficult to retell, can fiction accurately represent the real? Can fiction transform traumatic truths into desirable commodities that the public will then "buy"?

Regarding Daeninckx and Mako's *Octobre noir*, Stora's foreword, Daeninckx's afterword, Bédar's photograph, and Einaudi's list of victims attribute a degree of historical verisimilitude to narrative in which one member of a rock band searches tirelessly for his younger sister in the aftermath of the Paris massacre. He later recovers her lifeless body near a canal. The resemblance between Khelloudja (the fictional character) and Fatima Bédar is salient. Both are young Algerian women with long braids, who defied parental authority to participate in the demonstration, and who eventually died from drowning. Their bodies were not discovered until several days later. For Bédar's family, the delay between the demonstration and the moment Fatima's father identified her at the morgue allowed authorities to attribute cause of death to something other than police brutality. After accepting suicide as Fatima's official cause of death and the resulting feelings of shame and dishonor, the Bédar family no longer discussed Fatima until Louisa read Daeninckx's article twenty-five years after her sister's disappearance.

For those readers who might not find Daeninckx and Mako's narrative credible, Mohand's (the band's lead vocalist's) transformation from political apathy to political outrage following the events of October 17, 1961 and his sister's death appears realistic and anchored in truth on account of the cartoonists' use of paratext as a narrative framing device. Without this necessary frame, Daeninckx and Mako's comic book might be read as detective fiction devoid of historical significance. There are scenes that allude to the imposed curfew and police brutality directed at Algerian workers living in Paris. For example, on Mohand's way home at the beginning of the narrative, he witnesses two policemen who beat an Algerian to death before throwing his corpse into the river. Without the paratext, readers might misinterpret this particular scene or fail to understand its relevance with respect to narrative time—much like Mohand seems to do as he witnesses the scene from a distance.

Once the central protagonist arrives home, his parents confront him about not respecting the curfew. Again this detail is left unexplained from a diegetic perspective. A few pages later, the reader and Mohand learn more about the curfew and the Algerian community's proposed response. As Mohand tries to evade his father at the mandatory demonstration in order to perform at a battle of the bands, a shift occurs in narrative. In panels where Mohand makes his escape, a narrative voice-over replaces speech balloons and describes from a privileged and highly critical vantage point the demonstration's preparatory phase: "On s'est fait raser de frais pour exiger la liberté au cœur même de l'empire qui dicte sa loi" [We had a fresh shave so as to demand freedom at the very heart of the empire that lays down its law] (Daeninckx and Mako 2011, 31). The "on" accomplishes three narrative objectives. The pronoun establishes the passage from fictional narrative to eyewitness testimony, demonstrating that the line separating fiction and testimony is thin. The publisher's dedication, positioned as a double page with the title page, also indicates a personal connection to the events represented. The editor dedicates the album to his mother, his father, and to all protestors who participated in the march. This paratextual addition suggests that the editor was perhaps a young witness or, at the very least, has heard direct accounts from his parents. Another reading of the "on" is that it is a pronoun that renders the subject anonymous (as in "one"). Again the editor's dedication establishes this possible interpretation: "à tous les anonymes, manifestants pacifiques et leurs familles; à tous ceux qui leur ont porté soutien, eux aussi anonymes, tous acteurs du 17 octobre 1961 et des jours suivants" [to all the anonymous, peaceful demonstrators and their families; to all those who supported them, they too anonymous, all participants of October 17, 1961 and the following days] (2011, n.p.). Although Einaudi's list of victims reveals the identity of some of the deceased, he was unable to unearth the names of all individuals, many of whom remain inscribed on his list as "[i]nconnu FMA [Français musulman d'Algérie]" [unknown FMA (French Muslim from Algeria)] (2011, 57). Finally, the "on" as an unofficial "we" invites the reader to leave his/her spectator position as comic book reader and to become an actor in the narrative and historical moment. At the end of the sequence, narrative voice-overs and the ambiguous "on" disappear.

Daeninckx and Mako return to character dialogues contained within conventional speech balloons until the final page in which Mohand recites a poem by Algerian novelist and poet Kateb Yacine. As Mohand walks away from the Olympia stage, lines of poetry invade the remaining panels as narrative voice-overs so that Yacine's and Mohand's voices converge toward the reader at the comic book's conclusion. The use of the familiar you or "tu" allows the poet and protagonist to address and, consequently, challenge the (French) reader: "peuple français, tu as tout vu oui tout vu de tes propres yeux et maintenant vas-tu parler? et

maintenant vas-tu te taire?” [people of France, you saw everything, yes, everything with your own eyes and now will you speak? Or will you remain silent?] (Daeninckx and Mako 2011, 54). With this provocative ending, Daeninckx and Mako implore French readers, now eyewitnesses in their own right to the October 17, 1961 massacre, to transmit the memory of this historical moment to future generations, to speak (“parler”) rather than remain silent (“te taire”). From this perspective, *Octobre noir* functions in a way unavailable to traditional historical texts. While historical narrative establishes distance between reader and history to create the illusion of historical objectivity, comic book narrative can serve to bridge this distance, inviting readers to participate as both actors and narrators with respect to their national history. With Stora’s benediction, Daeninckx and Mako demonstrate that history does not have to derive from official sources, that it needs to listen to marginalized voices and to see the unseen.

Désirée and Alain Frappier’s recent publication, *Dans l’ombre de Charonne*, recycles several strategies observed in Daeninckx and Mako’s *Octobre noir*. The central importance of the paratext becomes immediately apparent to readers as they study the cover illustration. “Préface de Benjamin Stora” [Foreword by Benjamin Stora] appears below the title and in line with the street lighting, reduced here to a series of white circles. Stora’s foreword, “Charonne ou l’oubli impossible” [Charonne or the Impossible Oblivion], takes on greater significance than his contribution to *Octobre noir*. Firstly, the artist provides a drawing of Stora just above his text. This addition visually places Stora, the respected historian, within the comics’ realm. Instead of existing on the narrative’s periphery, Stora becomes a comic book character, implicated in both narrative content and time. The second aspect of Stora’s foreword that strikes readers is his personal connection to the narrative’s central protagonist. If the first page of his foreword provides a historical overview of the February 8, 1962 massacre—similar to the initial section of his *Octobre noir* foreword—the following page reveals Stora’s relationship with Maryse Douek:

J’ai rencontré pour la première fois Maryse Douek-Tripier (mariée avec Pierre Tripier) au tout début des années 1980 à l’université Paris-7 Jussieu dans le département de sociologie où je venais d’avoir un poste d’assistant. Elle était l’une des premières à ce moment à travailler en France sur l’immigration ouvrière, et ses travaux de recherches faisaient, déjà, autorité. Je commençais à l’époque mes recherches sur l’histoire de l’Algérie, et nous avons beaucoup discuté du parcours singulier des ouvriers immigrés algériens en France, notamment pendant la guerre d’Algérie. Mais je ne me souviens pas avoir évoqué avec elle la tragédie du métro Charonne, et pourtant . . . (Stora 2012, 8)

[I met Maryse Douek-Tripier (married to Pierre Tripier) for the first time in the early 1980s at the University Paris-7 Jussieu in the sociology department where I had just obtained an assistantship. At the time, she was among the first in France to work on labor immigration and her research was already authoritative. I was starting my research on the history of Algeria at the time, and we often discussed the singular trajectory of Algerian immigrant workers in France, especially during the Algerian War. But I cannot remember ever discussing the Charonne subway tragedy with her. Had I only known . . .]

Daeninckx’s afterword to *Octobre noir* places him, the scriptwriter, in a privileged position relative to his narrative; he was an eyewitness to the October 17, 1961 massacre as a young boy. His memory later became a motivating force for his literary and comic book projects. In contrast, Stora’s foreword establishes the veracity of the eyewitness testimony that readers are about to discover. Based on Maryse Douek’s testimony, Désirée and Alain Frappier have reconstituted the events of the Charonne subway massacre. Stora’s foreword not only confers a measure of authenticity on the historical events depicted in *Dans l’ombre de Charonne*, his text also designates Maryse Douek as a credible narrator due to her status as participant, eyewitness, and scholar.

What is more, Stora’s foreword engages with the notion of historical amnesia, *l’oubli*. His presentation of events in “Charonne ou l’oubli impossible” underscores the long period of amnesia followed by a more recent period of anamnesis. Analogous to October 17, 1961, February 8, 1962 has finally surfaced in French collective memory. Yet contrary to October 17, 1961 whose legacy has remained hidden for reasons explained below, the Charonne massacre was buried due to the progressive weakening of the French Communist Party (PCF), identified as the principal guardian of this particular memory. Stora further argues in his foreword to Daeninckx and Mako’s comic book, “[l]a nuit du 17 octobre s’est longtemps enfoncée dans les eaux boueuses de la mémoire française. Recouverte par l’autre nuit de Maurice Papon, celle du métro Charonne de février 1962” [the night of October 17, 1961 has long been stuck in the muddy waters of French memory. Covered by the other night of Maurice Papon, that of the Charonne subway in February 1962] (2011, 11). He stresses that the two massacres are related, that “[l]es deux événements s’éclairent l’un par l’autre” [the two events shed light on each other] (Stora 2011, 11). Although these demonstrations were both reactions against how the Algerian War was being waged on metropolitan French soil—October 17 contested the racist administrative measures enforced by the Paris police; February 8 demonstrated French discontent with OAS terrorism—, February 8 had the unfortunate effect of overshadowing October 17. Why? Einaudi’s list of victims appearing at the end of *Octobre noir* clearly illustrates the extreme violence used against protestors who were primarily Algerians living in France. The violent acts of repression instituted by the Paris police predate October 17. For the nine immediate victims of the Charonne massacre (another individual succumbed to his injuries nearly twenty years later), all were metropolitan French men and women who have since been identified. *Dans*

*l'ombre de Charonne* ends with a series of appendices, the first of which is a presentation of victims that includes their name, profession, age in 1962, and photograph. Stora suggests—while others, notably Daeninckx, have stated outright—that if we will probably never learn the exact number of anonymous Algerian casualties from October 1961, we do know the identities of those killed in February 1962. Daeninckx writes: “Au métro Charonne, le 8 février 1962, la police du préfet Maurice Papon n’a pas tué 9 manifestants anonymes” [At the Charonne subway station, on February 8, 1962, the police prefect Maurice Papon did not kill nine anonymous protestors] (2011, 55).

The paratext of *Dans l'ombre de Charonne* defines a clear distinction between October 17, 1961 and February 8, 1962: for the Charonne massacre, the victims were not anonymous, and they were French. Consequently, the narrative adopts a significantly different tone than that of *Octobre noir*. As readers, we are invited to accept *Dans l'ombre de Charonne* as recorded eyewitness testimony while the ambiguity surrounding October 17 creates space for fictionalized representation. The drawn portraits of Benjamin Stora, Désirée Frappier, and Alain Frappier, in addition to that of Maryse Douek throughout the comic book, emphasize that reality often bleeds into representation and vice versa, rendering them, at times, indistinguishable. Readers note numerous examples of “official” documentation included at the end of the album. Among these are an investigative article published in *L'Express* [Express] on February 15, 1962; a political leaflet distributed by the Renault-Billancourt chapter of the General Confederation of Labor, a workers’ union (CGT) denouncing the October 17, 1961 massacre and published one day later; a letter addressed to Ray Charles—he was scheduled to perform at the *Palais des Sports* [Sports Palace] in 1961 where thousands of Algerians had been detained following the October 17 demonstration—and later published in *L'Avant-Garde* [Avant-Garde] on October 25, 1961; an additional eyewitness account of the Charonne massacre contributed by a protestor documenting the historical context leading up to February 8, 1962 and its aftermath; and a bibliography of books, articles, films, and photography archives about the Algerian War consulted during the creative process. The inclusion of nonfictional, historical documents serves to guarantee the authenticity of the preceding comic book narrative. More so than the other comics studied here, *Dans l'ombre de Charonne* actively blurs the line separating reality and representation, ethics and aesthetics, truth and fiction. Further evidence of this narrative strategy can be found throughout the album in which inked drawings are sometimes superimposed onto photographic images (see chapter 4). As a result, the reader is able to visualize the presence of comic book characters representing real people at various demonstrations around the capital, which were later documented in the press.

Even though the authors of the *Carnets* forewords engage with album content and, more specifically, Ferrandez’s representation of history, they tend to emphasize historical veracity over the quality of verbal and visual representation. Such endorsements may have led critics to celebrate the series as “[u]ne exemplaire réussite d’une reconstitution historique aussi scrupuleusement exacte que passionnément vraie” [an exemplary success of a historical reconstitution that is as meticulously accurate as it is passionately true] (Anon 1995). In contrast, the authors of *Azrayen*’s preliminary additions focus less on historical accuracy than on the album’s narrative structure and visual elements. They also offer an educational and historical context with which the album’s fictional content is meant to comply. In addition to Stora’s foreword on the album’s historicity and the cartoonists’ artistic achievements within the series, Frank Giroud contributes contextualizing information regarding French Algeria from 1830 until 1954 (2008a, 6–7). In contrast to the *Carnets d'Orient*, *Azrayen*’ resembles *Octobre noir* and *Dans l'ombre de Charonne* because it narrates one event rather than the entire war. *Azrayen*’ also explores the war’s rural character instead of focusing on urban battles. Stora’s and Giroud’s preliminary comments situate *Azrayen*’s action during a specific historical moment, the winter of 1957, and in a specific geographical location, Kabylia, a mountainous region in northern Algeria that borders the Mediterranean. Both Stora and Giroud invite the reader to consider *Azrayen*’ within a larger historical context: the shared history between France and Algeria. Without contextualizing arguments, the album’s significance and historical relevancy are lost to the uninformed reader. By relegating this information to the paratext, Lax and Giroud can focus their efforts on developing their fictional account within a historical framework. It should be noted that Lax and Giroud also include footnotes throughout the series in order to explain references or abbreviations used in dialogue to the reader. Footnotes are generally short and disrupt neither the narrative flow nor the positioning of panels on individual pages.

Benjamin Stora fleshes out the significance of *Azrayen*’s landscapes, underscoring the harshness of winter in a mountainous area as well as the impenetrable tangle of roots, branches, and succulent plants hindering the soldiers’ movements. Lax visualizes the chaos of the Kabyle landscape with dense vegetation drawn in yellowish sepia hues. The album’s color scheme gives the appearance that this region is arid and barren. As Stora aptly observes, Lax’s depiction of nature personifies the Kabyle mentality that he describes as “une volonté de refus et d’indépendance” [a determination of refusal and independence] (2008, 5). Kabylia and the

Kabyle population actively resist the French throughout the series. The soldiers discover over the course of their mission that the landscape presents more of an obstacle than the insurgents. The hillsides and vegetation obstruct visibility, leaving the patrol vulnerable to attack; animals surprise soldiers who mistake them for *fellagha* [bandits]; and melting snow frequently washes out bridges and roads. The search patrol is frequently depicted changing flat tires, repairing their vehicles, and consulting maps. While French officers provide several plausible reasons for the disappearance of the lost patrol—perhaps they were ambushed?—, the search patrol discovers that their compatriots were victims of unexpected severe weather conditions. The find is significant because it absolves the native population of any crimes. Tragically, this realization occurs too late. When the French recover personal effects of lost soldiers in a nearby village, they execute villagers and burn the village before learning the truth about what happened to the lost convoy several panels later.

Similarly, Giroud emphasizes the importance of the Kabyle landscape in his afterword. He chose *Azrayen*'s wintery mountain setting so as to offer a different vision of Algeria to his French reading public mostly familiar with Algeria's deserts, drifting sands, and dry heat. He writes, "[c]ar si dans l'imaginaire populaire la guerre d'Algérie reste liée à des paysages ocre et poussiéreux, écrasés de soleil, le souvenir d'un 'gus', dans la réalité, se colore souvent d'une tout autre nuance" [for if in the popular imaginary, the Algerian War remains linked to ocher and dusty sun-scorched landscapes, a 'guy's' (draftee's) memory is, in reality, often tinted a different shade] (Giroud 2008b, 124). Through this commentary Giroud indicates his desire to challenge reader perceptions of Algeria and, by extension, the Algerian War. His remarks also underline his desire to use a hostile landscape to express the harsh realities of war more effectively. More so than in any other album studied here, the setting plays a vital role. In it are translated the soldiers' anxieties and fears about being in an unfamiliar territory "où chaque ombre insolite, chaque tronc déformé distillait la peur parce que chaque roc, chaque repli de terrain abritait une menace potentielle" [where each unusual shadow, each distorted tree trunk exuded fear because every rock, every bend housed a potential threat] (Giroud 2008b, 127–28). The series' illustrator, Christian Lax, was unable to travel to Algeria to view the Kabyle landscape firsthand. His sketches are therefore based on images published in France and on Giroud's own photographs taken during his journey to Algeria in 1993. Lax traveled to an analogous region in Morocco (in the Atlas Mountains) one year before completing the album.

In contrast to Stora's foreword, Giroud's preface only provides background information relative to the war. It differs significantly from his afterword more aptly described as a "making of." Gérard Genette suggests that prefaces and afterwords each have a specific purpose with respect to the main text. While prefaces speak to potential readers, afterwords address actual readers. Due to their placement, afterwords are not meant to recruit and orient readers, but rather to act as an addendum to the main text (Genette 1987, 220). Giroud's afterword does not serve curative and corrective functions. His preface serves to contextualize *Azrayen*' within the larger framework of Franco-Algerian history, and his afterword provides a detailed explanation of Lax and Giroud's creative process. This clear delimitation between preface and afterword points to the existence of two distinct yet vital texts without which the album would be incomplete.

Giroud's afterword expounds the difficult situation confronting military draftees like his father in Algeria. The individual soldier often becomes trapped within the confines of history. Giroud's afterword, titled "Une épopée algérienne" [An Algerian Epic], outlines the creative process behind *Azrayen*' the album and underscores the album's merging of official and individual histories. Writing from the perspective of an aggregated historian, Frank Giroud uses his afterword to explain his preoccupation with historical verisimilitude. After describing how and why he chose his narrative focus, Giroud explains the research involved in producing *Azrayen*' including the consultation of textual and iconographic documentation, interviews with French soldiers and Pieds-Noirs, and field research in Algeria. Giroud traveled to Algeria in order to familiarize himself with its landscapes and to find mujahidin willing to retell their war stories (2008b, 125–26). He stipulates that extensive field research is normally incongruous to comics whose primary objective, when it comes to history, is to create a historical effect:

À vrai dire, [le repérage sur place] n'est pas incontournable: quel que soit le récit, on peut toujours le mener à bien en bornant son odyssée aux bibliothèques et aux librairies; après tout, un scénariste n'est ni un historien, ni un journaliste, et en cas d'ignorance, il lui suffit de passer habilement sous silence les éléments qui lui manquent. Mais chez moi c'est une vieille habitude." (Giroud 2007b, 126)

[To tell the truth, field research is not necessary: whatever the story is, one can always develop it by limiting one's research to libraries and bookstores; after all, a writer is neither a historian nor a journalist, and in the case of ignorance, it suffices the artist to avoid discussing elements that elude him/her. But for me, field research is an old habit.]

Giroud's preference for field research and oral testimonies over secondary sources echoes Mark McKinney's analysis of the history effect of comics: "instead of history simply authenticating fiction, such fictions contribute to a reevaluation of French colonial history" (2013a, 57). In the afterword, Giroud indirectly reminds readers that his research has led him to write a version of history. In the spirit of Genette, Giroud



addresses his afterword to actual, not anticipated readers, who may question the album's veracity despite Benjamin Stora's prefatory contribution. Speaking as a historian, Giroud does not discredit history. His afterword suggests that his historical vision, based on field research, creates a fictional world through which he can transmit the stories and memoirs of those he interviewed.

A close reading of *Azrayen's* paratextual elements, and specifically Giroud's afterword, demonstrates that they fulfill two major objectives within the series. Firstly, they make important claims regarding the series' authenticity as a historical and semibiographical comic book. Secondly, these elements suggest that a comic book's authenticity establishes a causal relationship between narrative and history, on the one hand, and narrative and memory, on the other. As previously indicated, Giroud's closing remarks outline the research involved in creating *Azrayen*. Contrary to Ferrandez's bibliographies and prefatory material, Giroud's text emphasizes personal contacts with people and places. The series' plot, characters, and landscapes surfaced through a reading of his father's war diary, detailed discussions with his father about his wartime experiences, face-to-face interviews conducted in Algeria, and hikes in and around Kabylia. Giroud mentions that the majority of the series' episodes and characters are based on real people and events. His father, for example, reappears as the soldier Paturel (Giroud 2008b, 124). While some of the characters and events from *Carnets d'Orient* are based on reality, Giroud privileges his father's personal memories over national memory and recontextualizes them in narrative. In contrast to Ferrandez's research, Giroud sought to highlight forgotten events and everyday life in the French army. His representation of the war is more personal "[dont l']objectif est de restituer les sentiments et les sensations d'un appelé plongé malgré lui dans ce conflit" [whose goal is to reconstitute the feelings and sensations of a draftee plunged into this conflict in spite of himself] (Giroud 2008b, 122).

Giroud's afterword offers additional information about the creative process and how it affected Giroud's relationship with his father. The discovery of his father's photographs and journals initially piqued Giroud's interest, and creating *Azrayen* helped him reconnect with his father. Giroud writes that before finding his father's journals, he knew little about him: "lorsque je découvre le carnet dans lequel il a consigné ces images et ces réflexions, il n'est encore pour moi qu'un père de famille attentionné, que je ne vois plus très souvent mais dont je conserve une vision fort éloignée de celle qui transparaît dans ce cahier-souvenir" [when I discover the sketchbook in which he recorded these images and reflections, at that moment he's just a caring father for me, one that I don't see very often. I have an image of him that is very different from the one that comes across in his diary] (2008b, 122). The relationship between Giroud and his father mirrors that between Marco and his father in Larcenet's series. Marco's fictional father never breaches his silence whereas *Azrayen* instigates a dialogue between Giroud and his father who actively participated in researching the subject and in setting up interviews for his son. His father returned to Algeria during the Civil War in order to share his past with Giroud. Because Giroud is a historian, his research was not limited to survivor testimonies. His initial task was to collect information, not only from eyewitnesses like his father, but also from critical histories, documentaries, and period newspapers and newsmagazines. His emphasis on written and spoken testimonies in the afterword suggests that history and memory are inseparable. Regarding historical taboos such as the Algerian War that are "si bien cadenassé" [so well padlocked] in hegemonic discourses (Giroud 2008b, 122), memory often supplants history in private spaces. Only when such topics are broached, as between Giroud and his father, can healing begin. Giroud includes a particularly striking example in his afterword. While interviewing mujahidin, he and his father met Abdellah who deserted the French army after World War II and later joined the FLN. Giroud's father and Abdellah, who fought against each other during the Algerian War, were able to share their experiences with great interest and without animosity. Describing their encounter, Giroud writes, "[a]musé, ébahi, j'assiste à cette discussion technique et surréaliste entre deux hommes qui, quarante ans plus tôt, combattaient dans des camps opposés!" [amused, amazed, I watch this technical and surrealist discussion between two men who, forty years earlier, had been fighting on opposing sides!] (2008b, 133).

Giroud observes during his pilgrimage to Algeria that the revolution is deeply ingrained in national mythology. Even though he finds fault with representations of the war in the Algerian press, literature, and popular culture (Giroud cites Amouri's comic book *Sur les sentiers escarpés* [On Steep Paths]), he is equally judgmental of how the war has not been integrated into French national history. McKinney notes, "[Lax and Giroud] made a concerted effort to inform themselves about a variety of Algerian and French perspectives on the conflict by reading historical and fictional accounts of the war . . . , but also by talking with many individuals from different groups that participated in or witnessed the conflict" (2013a, 162). Unfortunately, Giroud was unable to locate representatives of all groups concerned, notably Harkis and Messali Hadj's supporters. His representation of the war is mostly inspired by his father's diary. Despite the narrative's limited scope when compared to Ferrandez's series, *Azrayen* accomplishes what it sets out to do: "tire[r]

l'épisode de son purgatoire" [to pull the episode from its purgatory] (2008b, 124).

For other cartoonists, the focus on personal and family experiences creates alternatives to strict historical reconstitutions, which demonstrate how memory and history making in comics can facilitate healing. Anne Sibran and Didier Tronchet include prefatory material that makes claims for the album's biographical—not historical—accuracy. In her preface, Sibran, who is in fact transcribing her father's story, takes on the role of a cultural mediator by "translating" her father's Pied-Noir experiences so that they can be understood by a French audience susceptible to prejudicial feelings toward this particular community. Sibran's preface serves to control reader reception. As an outsider/insider with respect to Pied-Noir culture, Sibran uses the paratext to establish a special relationship to her subject and readers. For those French readers who might equate "Pied-Noir" with "colonialist," Sibran invites them to consider the existentialist conundrums pertaining to Pied-Noir identity in the wake of decolonization. Born in France to Pied-Noir parents, Anne Sibran narrates her father's difficult decision to leave Algiers and equally difficult integration into French society. Other than her own prefatory remarks explaining her creative process and choice of subject, Sibran does not include other textual inserts to contextualize or authenticate her narrative. Nor does she need to; by stressing that *Là-bas* is her father's story, Sibran eliminates the need for scholarly endorsements. This is also the case for Morvandiau's *D'Algérie* in which the cartoonist presents his family's Algerian history. Comics scholar Ann Miller further comments that *D'Algérie* gives "artistic form to a transnational heritage" (2011, 110). Sibran's preface authenticates her narrative as a fictional biography embedded in French and Algerian history. With the help of old postcards, she attempts to recreate her father's guarded memories of Algiers before he immigrated to Toulouse and later Paris in July 1962. Sibran explains that due to her father's repressed memories (specifically, a drive-by shooting and his emigration), she was forced to fill in the gaps not only of her father's biography, but also of her childhood. Despite never having visited Algeria, the scriptwriter feels a strong personal connection with the country, the culture, and its people. Having learned about Algiers in her "fauteuil de velours rouge" [red velvet armchair] (Sibran 2003, 3), Sibran's visualization of the capital is more visceral than objective, relying on emotions that postcard images and her father's words have instilled in her.

Sibran's prefatory remarks provide a key for understanding Tronchet's illustrations and his particular use of color to depict emotion. The scriptwriter's recreation of her father's last days in Algeria and his declining psychological state in France is based on the emotional charge of significant moments. In Sibran's own memory, as described in her preface, she associates colors with these memories, an association easily articulated in comics. Remembering times when her father described his departure from Algiers, Sibran writes:

Mon père avait sa voix chaude et cassée, cette voix de celtic [*sic*] bleues entre deux tons, et me priant maintenant de refermer la porte. Je m'asseyais devant lui sur le fauteuil de velours rouge, n'osant poser le dos de peur qu'il m'engloutisse, que mes pieds perdent la terre et qu'il aperçoive que je n'étais qu'une toute petite fille, à qu'il racontait une histoire de grand. (2003, 2)

[My father had a warm and raucous voice, that voice of Celtique-brand cigarettes in the pack between two shades of blue, asking me to close the door. I sat down in front on him on the red velvet armchair, not daring to sit back for fear that it would swallow me whole, that my feet would lose the earth and that he would notice that I was only a little girl to whom he was telling a big person's story.]



**Figure 3.2** Tronchet's use of color creates different levels of narration. Source: From Anne Sibran and Tronchet, *Là-bas* (Paris: Dupuis, 2003), p. 63. © Dupuis.

This passage stresses two colors: blue and red. The blue reminds Sibran of her father's smoker's voice (and the blue cigarette carton that caused it) while the red stirs memories of when her father spoke about Algeria. While these are not the only colors used in the album (McKinney 2011c, 234), they dominate Tronchet's color scheme. Near the end of the album, they are used together, emphasizing the relationship between personal memory and memory transmission (Figure 3.2). In this example, red symbolizes the father's past and blue symbolizes the present connection between father and daughter, bonding over family memories.<sup>4</sup> Blue and red do not always carry the same symbolic value and are often used to convey emotional affect: red for fear or anger (in this scene, Sibran's father relives a traumatic shooting in an open-air market of which he was the only survivor), blue for nostalgia and sadness (when the daughter notices her father's fatigue and worsening

depression), and green for disease (when her paternal aunt is diagnosed with stomach cancer).

In the end, Sibran resembles her father by fixating on his emigration from Algiers as a decisive moment in the construction of their identity. If her present life is in France, her past and family heritage is to be found elsewhere. Only by listening and ingesting her father's stories and, specifically, the transition between past and present can the daughter learn to help her father move forward. The reader learns from the preface that *Là-bas* is as much about Sibran as it is about her father. When the daughter character reaches adulthood, her father's stories, once a preferred source of bedtime tales, engender feelings first of anger regarding her father's failures in France, and later of anxiety about her father's future. Worried about her father's declining mental state as he returns more frequently and more profoundly into his Algerian memories, the daughter, through a sustained dialogue, helps her father create alternate endings to his traumatic visions. The father's guilt, for example, for having survived the OAS shooting debilitates him, causing him to detach completely from reality at the end of the album. Through her words and Tronchet's images, Sibran transforms the banks of the Seine into the Algerian coastline so that her father can relive his trauma one last time. The shooting scene incidentally appears three times in the album: at its beginning, middle, and end. This time, however, Sibran's narrative resuscitates the market victims, creating a dialogue of redemption and forgiveness, banishing her father's feelings of guilt. Sibran's words liberate her father and her perception of him from the confines of history, from negative interpretations of her Pied-Noir heritage.

Not all comics on the Algerian War make claims for historical and biographical authenticity as openly as the albums cited above. In fact, some comics create a historical or biographical effect through the addition of inauthentic material to their narrative structure. One prominent example of how some comics use fiction to amplify reality or to create Barthes' "reality effect" is Guy Vidal and Alain Bignon's *Une éducation algérienne*. This comic book includes several excerpts from the protagonist's war diary reminiscent of Giroud's father's diary. Loosely based on Vidal's real-life experiences as a French soldier in Algeria, *Une éducation algérienne* remains a work of fiction and does not claim to reflect the scriptwriter's political views or personal affiliations. Instead, the comic book functions as a diary, "annotated scrapbook or photo album salvaged from history" (McKinney 2013a, 157).

Although the album is a fictional account, Vidal's military status suggests that the album is based on actual events or, at the very least portrays possible events, leaving the reader to wonder if Albert's diary is based on Vidal's own war journal. Vidal becomes a credible witness and source, conceding a measure of biographical and historical authenticity to the album. *Une éducation algérienne* mirrors the written testimonies of French soldiers with its photographs, letters, care packages from home, and diaries that fail to erase the horrors of war experienced by young men in their twenties. According to Stora, war diaries are "une façon de résister au temps perdu, de retrouver cette partie de soi que la condition militaire voulait nier en effaçant ce qui la reliait à la vie civile" [a way of resisting lost time, of rediscovering that part of oneself that military life tried to deny by erasing what was connecting it to civilian life] (2005, 39). The protagonist's diary, which only appears at the album's beginning (1960) and end (1962), creates a portal through which the reader can view the protagonist's shift from apathy to antimilitarism, shift provoked by elements of the album's plot and other characters. Reminiscent of pages from Giroud's father's journals, Albert's diary entries document daily occurrences while providing personal commentaries. Giroud's father emphasizes the violence he witnesses, just as Albert enumerates examples of French racism toward the native population and tactical errors committed by the French army to the detriment of the European population. The Albert who is finally discharged and sent home barely resembles the Albert who first addresses the reader. Throughout the album, Albert witnesses summary executions, torture, and broken alliances. His commanding officer and role model, for instance, murders his subordinates and later commits suicide in the name of French Algeria.

When Albert finally returns home, he realizes that nothing has changed despite the war. The album's final panels, depicting people leaving on summer vacation, juxtapose those preceding them in which tearful Pieds-Noirs are evacuating Algiers en masse. This opposition, rendered even more poignant through Bignon's illustrations articulates metropolitan French apathy, similar to Albert's before being deployed, with respect to the war and its consequences. The visual juxtaposition suggests that by 1962, Algeria, its war, and the impending mass exodus of Algeria's European population scarcely concerned the inhabitants of metropolitan France. This perception comes to the fore in the album's final panel in which Albert is reunited with his mother who exclaims: "Mon Dieu, Albert mon poulet! . . . Tu n'as pas changé" [My God, Albert my dear! . . . You haven't changed] (Vidal and Bignon 1982, 56). Of course Albert has changed as evidenced by his diary entries and growing disgust for the French army.

I now move to my final example of authenticating paratext, which takes the form of extra-diegetic textual inserts intended to substantiate observations made in comics about postwar French civil society. Farid Boudjellal's *Jambon-Beur* [Ham-Beur]<sup>5</sup> demonstrates how cartoonists can effectively embed this kind of

paratext in comics. The interviews and adolescent testimony that appear among the album's various pages, transcend the category of authenticating paratext and move readers toward what I call "documentary paratext," meaning paratext taken from journalistic sources (I analyze journalism in war comics in the next chapter). These specific additions play a major role in authenticating historical comic book narrative and are used in a number of texts. They also accomplish another objective central to comics selected for this study: they give voice to other sources, upending the hierarchy of sources implied in a "history-from-above" approach. Here marginalized voices, such as anonymous eyewitnesses who perhaps do not share the same academic rigor as historians regarding their analysis of an event, contribute and sometimes initiate dialogue about a contested historical moment. Instead of promoting a chronological view of history, the examination of such documents encourages the development of a civic consciousness among readers and, ideally, students, recalling the French history curriculum's civic objective introduced in chapter 2.

In Boudjellal's case, allographic paratext functions as both contemporary documents for study and testimony submitted by children of mixed-race couples and adults involved in a mixed-race couple. These textual inserts, titled "InfoMixte," supply the reader with the articulated experiences of individuals living in France who, based on sociological analyses of the Beur community,<sup>6</sup> struggle to make sense of their cultural and linguistic hybridism. Similar to Charlotte-Badia, Boudjellal's central protagonist (and later protagonists), the contributors to "InfoMixte" reflect on identity and, to a certain extent, colonial history: "Des unions tout en contrastes, naissent des enfants, qui vont se forger une identité en ressuscitant inévitablement le passé, en posant des questions . . . Ils nous racontent leurs inquiétudes, leurs certitudes et leurs incertitudes" [Children are born out of contrasting unions. These children will forge an identity, inevitably resurrect the past, ask questions . . . They tell us their concerns, their certainties, and their uncertainties] (Boudjellal 1995, 23). While the reader is left unaware as to the origin of these documents—are they fictional; who are the contributors and why were their testimonies selected?—, they provide compelling evidence supporting Boudjellal's fictional narrative and the constitution of Charlotte-Badia's subjectivity. The various editions of "InfoMixte" interspersed throughout the narrative do not focus entirely on the lives of postcolonial subjects. One of the merits of "InfoMixte" is the inclusion of other examples of mixing not predicated upon France's colonial legacy. For instance, one individual comments: "Dans notre famille, il y a plusieurs couples mixtes . . . Ma tante a épousé un Turc, ma grand-mère un Suédois et moi je me suis mariée avec un Polonais" [In our family, there are several mixed couples. . . . My aunt married a Turk, my grandmother a Swede, and I married a Pole] (Boudjellal 1995, 42).

France's colonial past has resulted in an increase in mixed marriages (mixed-race, mixed-religion, mixed-nationality, etc.) due to the resulting contact between cultures sometimes perceived as antithetical in terms of wealth, education, ethics, cultural values, religion, and skin color. Once again, the paratext offers readers a unique vantage point from which to view Boudjellal's fictional narrative. Patricia, Mahmoud, and their daughter Charlotte-Badia (later Charlotte and Badia), appear to experience more conflict in their marriage and family life than more homogeneous couples due to the Algerian War. Patricia's father was killed in combat, and the French tortured Mahmoud's father during the war. Despite their love for each other, unexpected political and familial tensions create conflict, driving a wedge between husband and wife. Although these divisive moments are brief, they do bring to light singular problems confronting similar couples. To quote one of Boudjellal's contributors: "Même un événement politique peut tout chambouler . . . Sans raison apparente, quand a éclaté [*sic*] la guerre du Golfe, il y a eu une fêlure dans notre couple . . . Pourtant nous évitions au maximum d'en parler à la maison" [Even a political event can turn everything upside down. . . . For no apparent reason, when the Gulf War broke out, there was a breakdown in our relationship . . . And yet we did our best to avoid talking about it at home] (1995, 42). Exterior forces can negatively affect mixed couples, resulting in a weakened union, divorce, or, in the case of Charlotte-Badia, a psychological split attempting to isolate the cultures that constitute her identity (see chapter 4).

The inclusion of extra-diegetic paratextual elements (prefaces, forewords, afterwords, and documentary paratext) suggests that the cartoonists studied in this chapter use historical comics to engage with and, at times, intervene in contemporary debates on colonialism, decolonization, and the uncertainty of the postcolonial present. The addition of nonfictional narratives, academic endorsements, and testimonies authenticate historical and biographical claims made in certain comic books. More importantly, however, these additions prepare readers for the kind of memory and history making that can occur in comics. The double conflation of history/memory and nonfiction/fiction that results from the merging of paratext and narrative, underscores the importance of alternative narratives in historical representation and in the preservation and/or transmission of individual, community, and collective memory. The comics along with the paratext analyzed here provide readers with the foundational components of postmemorial narrative: academic versions of history, the collective memory of the dominant group, and individual (personal or family)

testimony. Chapter 3 is therefore transitional, moving away from the more “academic” or “scholastic” historical narratives studied in chapters 1 and 2, and toward an understanding of the origins and evolutions of French collective memory of the war and French Algeria. The following chapters analyze the relationship between comic book narratives and media (chapter 4) and later Orientalist aesthetics (chapters 5 and 6) before exploring comics as a unique manifestation of postmemory (chapter 7).

## NOTES

1. Benjamin Stora contributed a foreword to the fourth volume of the *Carnets*’ first cycle, *Le centenaire* [The Centenary]. Ferrandez did not include as many forewords in the first half of his series. Additional forewords were later included when the first half was reedited as a single volume.

2. In *S/Z*, Barthes distinguishes between “readerly” (*lisible*) and “writerly” (*scriptible*) texts: “Le texte scriptible est un présent perpétuel, sur lequel ne peut se poser aucune parole *conséquence* (qui le transformerait, fatalement en passé); le texte scriptible, c’est *nous en train d’écrire* . . . Mais les textes lisibles? Ce sont des produits (et non des productions)” [The writerly text is a perpetual present, upon which no *consequent* language (which would inevitably transform it into the past) can be superimposed; the writerly text is *us in the process of writing*. But readerly texts? They are products (not works)] (1970, 10–11, his emphasis).

3. See Saïd Ferdi’s autobiography, *Un enfant dans la guerre*.

4. Although this image was reproduced in black and white for the present edition, readers can still detect the difference in narrative time based on Tronchet’s images. In the first panel, present-day Alain is engulfed in his past (Alain is the only figure not drawn in red), and, in the second, present-day Alain and his grown daughter Jeanne are depicted in blue (i.e., Alain has returned to the present). The two figures that Alain and Jeanne see in the foreground remain in red (Tronchet’s color for the past), demonstrating how the past can infiltrate and affect the present.

5. Boudjellal’s title represents a play on words that brings together the term “Beur” from the Beur generation, described as the first generation of Maghrebi immigrants who came of age in France during the 1980s, and the name of a common French sandwich, *jambon-beurre* [ham and butter]. Mark McKinney analyzes the title of Boudjellal’s comic book in considerable depth in “*Métissage* in Post-Colonial Comics” (1997, 183)—the first published study of *Jambon-Beur*—and *Redrawing French Empire in Comics* (2013a, 225).

6. For more on the Beur generation, see Michel Laronde’s *Autour du roman beur* and Alec G. Hargreaves’s *Voices from the North African Immigrant Community in France: Immigration and Identity in Beur Fiction*. *Jambon-Beur* was published in 1995; the term “Beur” and its relevance to French society today are now contested in scholarship on postcolonial and Francophone literatures. See, for example, Laura Reeck’s *Writerly Identities in Beur Fiction and Beyond*.



## Chapter 4

# Atrocity Photographs and Reporting War

Coming back to Gérard Genette's definition, paratext includes all liminal devices that mediate reader reception of a text. His seminal study does not include comics, which explains his categorical classification of illustrations as paratext. For him, images exist in the borderlands of the text and do not fully integrate narrative. In comics where text and image constitute key aspects of a multimodal narration, the imagetext can transcend the threshold of paratext and the narrative's time-space continuum, better known as diegesis. The most obvious way in which this happens in the comics studied here are press clippings and news photographs. Cartoonists working on the Algerian War recycle these materials in their albums where they are either integrated into individual panels as diegetic elements or where they transcend narrative by appearing in the gutter spaces. Despite differences between the various forms of paratext examined in chapters 3 and 4, all forms serve similar authenticating functions. Moving away from national education, examples in this chapter focus specifically on the mass media as a vector of transmission. Sandrine Lemaire reiterates the importance of media as a key vector even when compared to national education,

[l]'école, comme dernière institution traditionnelle de socialisation, mais aussi comme moyen essentiel de transmission, est au cœur de nombres d'enjeux et est montrée du doigt comme si elle était responsable de cette "politique de l'oubli." C'est omettre un peu vite le rôle des médias audiovisuels, celui des éditeurs, celui des conservateurs et, surtout, celui des politiques et des acteurs publics. (2011, 56)

[school, as the last traditional institution of socialization but also an essential vector of transmission, is at the heart of a number of issues and blamed for the "politics of forgetting." This blame effaces rather quickly the role played by the audiovisual media, editors, conservatives, and, most importantly, politicians and public policymakers.]

In this chapter, I demonstrate that media coverage of war often depends on the circulation and contextualization of atrocity photographs, and that comics are well positioned to reevaluate misleading journalistic accounts of the Algerian War.

Just as comics are changing the way history is written and presented, they have also challenged and contributed to changes in journalistic conventions. The works of cartoonists such as Joe Sacco (*Palestine, Safe Area Goražde*), Art Spiegelman (*In the Shadow of No Towers, Maus*), and Sue Coe (*Dead Meat*) have considerably changed common perceptions of comics and the graphic novel as predominately a form of mass entertainment. For many academics, this is nothing new. However, the medium continues to struggle with the cultural stigma generated by generations of superhero comics. In his convincing essay, Dirk Vanderbeke argues that comics journalism (and I would add journalism in comics) have taken up where the New Journalists of the 1960s and 1970s left off. While some of the comics presented here cannot be categorized as "comics journalism," several include aspects of comics journalism—defined here as the subjective experience of a journalist expressed in graphic novel form—and, more specifically, press excerpts or what I call "journalism in comics." Comics journalism (not to be confused with editorial cartoons) is a form of journalism that uses comics to create nonfictional news reports. While the Maltese-American cartoonist Joe Sacco (b. 1960) is frequently cited as the forerunner of this mode of representation, comics journalism has generated considerable interest in recent years leading to the development of a new subgenre in the comic arts and the appearance of several new Anglophone cartoonists such as Jen Sorensen, Dan Archer, and Sue Coe.

If Vanderbeke underscores the "didactic deceit" of comics, often regarded by educators as "a sugar coating for the bitter pill of learning" (2010, 72), he emphasizes recent developments in visual culture that have discredited more traditional forms of representation like photography and documentary film. The most important of these are postmodern deconstructionist tendencies that render any representation suspicious and advances in digital media that have allowed for the doctoring of images during postproduction (Vanderbeke 2010, 73). Vanderbeke recommends that because elements of traditional journalism like photographs are frequently re-appropriated and used to serve a political agenda, the public must look for alternative forms of representation, sending the message that "truth will not succumb to the hegemony created by the coalition



between the media and the political elite" (2010, 75). The comics presented throughout this book re-present 1950s and 1960s media coverage of the Algerian War. These comics seek to accomplish various narrative objectives, the most important of which is to authenticate historical narrative while providing new interpretations of historical events. In doing so, cartoonists invite readers to reconsider period material and to question traditional modes of media representation. One-way comics invite readers to complicate their understanding of history and memory is through the inclusion of journalistic paratext, which invites readers to reflect on how journalism as an institution feeds constructed truths to its readers.

In essays on photography, Susan Sontag, Marianne Hirsch, and Roland Barthes stress contemporary society's relationship with the image, arguably one of today's most important vectors of memory transmission due to the circulation and availability of photographs on the Internet. As material traces of the past, documentary images—more so than aesthetic ones—are thought to provide evidence for the existence of something or someone past. Their goal is to remove doubt and to counter historical revisionism. Aesthetic images, on the other hand, "introduce agency, control, structure, and therefore, distance from the real, a distance which might leave space for doubt" (Hirsch 1997, 24). Documentary photography remains a problematic medium in that viewers often believe in its power of authentication. Viewers forget or choose to ignore that photographs are not objective. Photos can be easily manipulated to distort meaning.

How do comics help readers cut through this confusion? By blurring the documentary/aesthetic divide, comics make readers aware of the photographic image as representation and not objective truth. Because comics function on a different level of iconicity than photographic realism, the medium can focus on specific details and eliminate others, amplifying meaning in a way that photography cannot. If all comic book "photographs" retain their original documentary appeal, their graphic aesthetic distances them from the objective realism associated with photography.

The inclusion of photographs in comics is also symptomatic of some cartoonists' desire to authenticate their portrayal of history. War comics sometimes recycle documentary and press photographs. The reproduction of authentic period material either as photographic reprints or drawings serves to confirm a comic book's historical accuracy. A cartoonist's familiarity with period iconography and media coverage of the war suggests that his/her narrative is anchored in national history and engages with national photo icons. The re-appropriation of documentary and press photography in comics creates new levels of signification relative to the original contexts of these images. The power of comics lies in their ability to weave a narrative web around de-contextualized photographs and to re-contextualize de-contextualized images. Viewers tend to understand images better when they are printed in a specific context such as part of a fictional or personal narrative. Consequently, cartoonists incorporate documentary and press photography as diegetic or extra-diegetic elements. As fictional characters directly experience the Algerian War, they are also reading newspapers and responding to photojournalistic sensationalism in the same way that people living in the 1950s and 1960s might have. Fanch Juteau writes, "la bande dessinée est forcément une vision actuelle du passé . . . avec pour obligation . . . de parler aux gens sur une base qu'ils connaissent" [comics are necessarily a contemporary vision of the past . . . with the obligation . . . to talk to people based on what they know] (2001, 87).

Near the end of Baru and Jean-Marc Thévenet's *Le chemin de l'Amérique* about an Algerian Arab boxer who later becomes involved in revolutionary politics, Saïd (the fictional boxer protagonist) is drawn reading an issue of *Paris Match*. This panel sequence occurs after he travels to Algeria and meets with his brother Ali. During their conversation, Saïd learns that Ali works for the FLN in Algiers. Throughout the album, Saïd struggles to maintain his political neutrality, hoping that boxing will shield him from the war and its consequences (McKinney 1997, 175; 2008, 139). This visit with his brother nevertheless demonstrates that the war has already touched him personally: Ali lost his hand in armed combat against the French. While Saïd persists in his delusion that he can remain on the fence politically, he learns that his manager has been paying his FLN dues and that Sarah, his girlfriend, has not been forthcoming about her wartime activities. The conversation between Ali and Saïd represents a turning point in the narrative after which Saïd understands that he cannot remain indifferent. When reading *Paris Match*, Saïd discovers the truth about Sarah, elucidating Ali's enigmatic end to their conversation: "Au fait, pour Sarah, je sais surtout que tu as tort" [In fact, about Sarah, I specifically know that you're wrong] (Thévenet and Baru 1998, 38). The article of interest is on the Jeanson Network, a French organization that provided financial and administrative support for FLN operatives in France. Saïd recognizes Sarah pictured behind a suspected FLN terrorist whose arrest forms the photograph's central focus. Saïd's meeting with Ali coupled with the unearthing of Sarah's involvement begins a downward spiral toward the album's denouement. The inclusion of a fictionalized *Paris Match* article serves to create a tangible link between Saïd and the war: the woman he loves is politically active. The reference contextualizes Baru and Thévenet's narrative within the history of the Algerian War, creating a "historical effect" within the album.<sup>1</sup>

The album's remaining pages are almost devoid of dialogue and depict Saïd's return to Paris. From this moment forward, history and politics overtake Saïd's life and the narrative. For example, the October 17, 1961 massacre interrupts his final boxing practice (see McKinney 2008, 153–57). When his coach opens the gym to protestors seeking refuge from the police, Saïd sees Sarah and runs after her. Images of police brutality overshadow the couple's reunion. While their destiny remains unclear (did they die during the massacre?), a mix of news clippings, photographs, and narrative voice-overs allude to their political activism in Algeria and elsewhere after 1961. The last press clipping included in the *Le chemin de l'Amérique* pictures Saïd, the former boxer, next to the following caption: "Qu'est devenu Saïd Boudiaf? On est toujours sans nouvelles du champion d'Europe cinq jours après sa disparition dans la nuit tragique" [What became of Saïd Boudiaf? We still haven't heard anything about the European champion five days after his disappearance during that tragic night] (Thévenet and Baru 1998, 44). This insert sets the tone for the album's remaining two pages in which the narrator speculates on what happened to Saïd: "qu'est devenu Saïd Boudiaf? A-t-il lui aussi péri dans cette horrible nuit d'octobre 61? Son cadavre a-t-il aussi été repêché dans la Seine au petit matin?" [what became of Saïd Boudiaf? Did he also perish in that horrible October 61 night? Was his body also recovered from the Seine during the early morning hours?] (Thévenet and Baru 1998, 45). News clippings resolve issues related to Saïd's desire for political neutrality. If the newspaper's fictional target audience knows Saïd as a boxer, the inclusion of a boxing photograph underscores the protagonist's double identity as a neutral sports figure and as a future Algerian political activist (Figure 4.1). The headline positioned directly adjacent to the photograph of Saïd the athlete challenges the reader to question not what happened to Saïd but rather to Saïd's political apathy. The second to last panel is an illustratively reproduced photograph in which Saïd is shown standing among Algerian leaders including Ben Bella, Algeria's first president (McKinney 2008, 159). The reliance on photographs and press clippings near the end of the album removes Saïd from the main narrative structure. He is no longer directly involved with the plot; he is now represented only indirectly through iconographic source material. Period material establishes a direct line of communication between the comic book and history and creates several layers of narration within the story.



**Figure 4.1** Journal article about Saïd after October 17, 1961. Source: *Le chemin de l'Amérique*, Jean-Marc Thévenet, Baru, and Daniel Ledran © CASTERMAN S.A.

Jacques Ferrandez does not develop the same level of personal connection between period material and his protagonists. Even though his characters read or discuss newspapers and newsmagazines to stay abreast of the Algerian events, they never recognize friends or family in major news stories. This difference does not suggest that Ferrandez's photographic inserts are narratively less significant. News clippings permeate the gutter spaces of four of the five *Carnets* volumes.<sup>2</sup> Of the series' second cycle, only *La guerre fantôme* (the sixth volume) does not incorporate news clippings into its pages. This narrative choice potentially suggests that before the Battle of Algiers (the historical context of the seventh volume), newspapers did not regularly cover the Algerian War, rendering it essentially invisible or "fantôme" [phantom]—at least from Ferrandez's perspective. Characters do not fully realize or acknowledge that a war is being waged around them. The frequency with which clippings appear increases as the series progresses. *Rue de la Bombe* (the seventh volume), *La fille du Djebel Amour* (the eighth volume), *Dernière demeure* (the ninth volume), and *Terre fatale* (the tenth volume) include newspaper collages at significant historical moments like de Gaulle's visit to Algeria, the week of barricades, and the generals' coup. For each album, Ferrandez selects headlines, articles, and images from several French and Algerian sources such as *La Dépêche* [The Dispatch], *Paris Match*, *L'Écho d'Alger* [Echo from Algiers], *Le Journal d'Alger* [The Algiers Daily], and *Le Monde* [The World]. Due to their spatial arrangement within pages, the textual and iconographic content of clippings fulfills an extra-diegetic purpose. Characters are able to discuss events elliptically, only mentioning important names or places and not detailed descriptions of events. News clippings can authenticate album historicity by confirming the occurrence of events directly discussed in dialogue.



Figure 4.2 The week of barricades in Algiers. Source: *Carnets d'Orient*, vol. 9: *Dernière demeure*, Jacques Ferrandez © CASTERMAN S.A.

Concerning the week of barricades in Algiers, headlines provide supplementary information so that readers understand the context of panels positioned on the same page (Figure 4.2). The pages appearing before and after the page in question are part of Ferrandez's fictional narrative: first, Octave's family abandons their farm after the death of Octave's father; later, Octave discusses Samia's departure with a friend in Algiers. The intruding "historical" page, on which none of Ferrandez's main characters figure, transitions the narrative from the family farm in Mascara to Algiers. Although Octave's mother feels that the capital is the only safe place for her, the following page demonstrates that certain members of the Pied-Noir community are holding Algiers hostage. This transitional page lets Ferrandez fast forward in time and space, from January 4, 1960 in Mascara to February 1, 1960 in Algiers. The spatiotemporal shift coupled with the abandonment of family property prepares the reader for the Pied-Noir exodus represented in the tenth and final volume of the series. The inserted news clippings contextualize Ferrandez's fictional narrative and provide evidence for the decline of French Algeria and the soured relations between France and the Pied-Noir community. Ferrandez creates panels based on iconic photographs including Michel Marcheux's picture of settlers, who responded to de Gaulle's call for Algerian self-determination by erecting barricades in Algiers. The photo and corresponding comic book panel show settlers with their white "Vive Massu" [Long Live Massu] banner. This image and period headlines do more than achieve a historical effect<sup>3</sup>: it assures readers that Ferrandez's narrative is firmly grounded in historical realism.

As shown above, the insertion of period source material in comics can confirm historical claims made in fictional dialogue. In *Terre fatale*, Octave meets with one of his superiors about the imminence of the generals' coup: "Les généraux Challe, Zeller et Jouhaud rejoints par Salan s'apprentent à prendre le pouvoir à Alger avec quelques régiments de paras et de la légion . . . C'est pour demain ou après-demain" [Generals Challe, Zeller, and Jouhaud along with Salan are preparing to seize power in Algiers with a few paratroopers and Foreign Legion regiments. . . . It's for tomorrow or the day after] (Ferrandez 2009a, 30). Their conversation becomes a debate about what the army should do: follow de Gaulle and abandon French Algeria or stay and defend it. Octave's decision to support the coup stems from his belief that French and Algerians can peacefully coexist on Algerian soil. While he does not support political extremism and violence, the necessity of protecting the land where his ancestors are buried trumps his political and moral principles. At the end of their conversation, Octave comes to the conclusion that he must side with the *putschistes* because, as he explains, "[j]e suis pied-noir! C'est ma famille! Elle a beaucoup de défauts, mais je n'en ai pas d'autre!" [I'm a Pied-Noir! That's my family! They have many bad qualities, but I don't have another one!] (Ferrandez 2009, 32). The page that follows the conversation between Octave and his superior is cluttered with newspapers announcing the coup. The press clippings transition the narrative from a conversation about the imminent coup to the coup itself. They provide evidence for historical claims made on the preceding pages. Period newspapers mention the generals responsible for the initiative and their Pied-Noir supporters. As headlines and press photographs encroach upon Ferrandez's fictional narrative, they overwhelm the reader by creating a reduced narrative space



on the page. The overlapping arrangement of newspapers accelerates narrative. Readers skim headlines and images before returning to the album's fictional components. The proliferation of newspapers along with the resulting visual disorder instills the narrative with a sense of urgency. The reader understands the importance of the coup both historically and within the *Carnets*.



Figure 4.3 Ferrandez's effective use of press clippings in narrative. Source: *Carnets d'Orient*, vol. 7: *Rue de la Bombe*, Jacques Ferrandez © CASTERMAN S.A.

Throughout the last four volumes of the *Carnets d'Orient*, Jacques Ferrandez exploits journalistic elements more successfully than any other cartoonist studied here. One striking example from *Rue de la Bombe* demonstrates the effectiveness of Ferrandez's style (Figure 4.3). The page contains three panels superimposed on a collage of headlines, articles, and photographs. The imagetext inserts appear after Ali, an Arab student living in Algiers, asks his cousin Samia (a medical student and Octave's (a Pied-Noir soldier's) girlfriend) to become a *porteuse de feu* [Algerian women who placed bombs in public spaces for the FLN]. Because Samia frequents European areas of Algiers, Ali argues, she could place bombs without attracting unwanted attention. Samia refuses to comply. Press clippings on the Milk Bar bombing—the first of three planned attacks targeting Europeans in Algiers in September 1956—link Samia and Ali's conversation with the next narrative sequence in which European characters discuss recent bombings. The first photographic insert, whose grey tones contrast sharply with the color red (blood) added by Ferrandez, lessens the impact of trauma on the reader. Comics allow cartoonists to engage with period iconography on a different level than prose alone through the re-appropriation and manipulation of more realistic photographic images. Caryn James posits that “the farther the war recedes into the past, the more imagination is needed to wrench it into the present” (1992). And even though, as critics like Susan Sontag have argued, the proliferation of graphic photographs has desensitized viewers to the visual impact of trauma, war comics trigger new responses to violent images. Historical distance and the public's desensitization to sensitive material necessitate Ferrandez's imaginative revision of realistic traumatic images. At the same time, the inclusion of period newspapers in a fictional framework provides readers with a personal vision of events. Artists can depict how newsworthy occurrences such as acts of terrorism might have affected individuals (perpetrators and victims) whose own personal stories are tightly bound to Franco-Algerian history. Distant historical events pictured in newspapers engage the reader through their transformation into personalized war narratives. The recycling of familiar images forces the reader to reconsider the dominant representations constituting collective war memories.

Sauveur's reference (Sauveur is one of the series' central Pied-Noir characters) to “tous ces événements” [all these events] (Ferrandez 2004, 7) immediately after the inserted press clippings suggests that the chosen image is an instance of visual metonymy. The Milk Bar incident stands in for all such tragedies, for “tous ces événements.” The reduction of trauma to one moment, one photograph that is then translated into a drawn

representation helps Ferrandez achieve several narrative objectives. Photographs create extra-diegetic levels of narration that run parallel to the album's main narrative structure. The artist's reworking of press photographs makes their traumatic subjects more bearable: chiaroscuro emphasizes movement while obscuring graphic violence. By including news clippings into the narrative framework regardless of the diegetic situation, Ferrandez animates still images. Press and documentary photographs taken in the 1950s and 1960s come to life in the *Carnets*. To the characters, the images are of current events and represent everyday life in Algeria during the war. The photograph of the Milk Bar bombing prepares readers for the fictional café bombing that occurs later in the same album and during which several main characters are injured. Ferrandez's depiction questions common assumptions about the FLN. His representation implies that these bombings were acts of revenge, a response to European extremists who bombed the Casbah. Even so, rather than portraying his Algerian characters as merciless criminals, the artist underscores their inner turmoil. These same characters often question the necessity of violence.

Positioned on the same page are images illustrating the arrest of Ahmed Ben Bella, one of the FLN's key figures who would later become Algeria's first president, as well as an article published in *L'Écho d'Alger* that contextualizes Octave's observation that "tout cela va cesser . . . maintenant qu'on a coffré Ben Bella et les principaux chefs terroristes en interceptant leur avion" [all that will stop . . . now that we arrested Ben Bella and the main terrorist leaders by intercepting their plane] (Ferrandez 2004, 7). If the press clippings contextualize a short and relatively obscure conversation for readers, the panels aid in creating a link between the three sets of news clippings depicting (1) Milk Bar bombings, (2) Ben Bella's arrest, and (3) Gamal Abdel Nasser's involvement. FLN political leaders were temporarily based in Cairo to avoid arrest by the French army. The mélange of visual and verbal elements of the individual clippings creates several layers of meaning on the page. Using the second set of clippings relative to Ben Bella's arrest, the reader must derive meaning from five main elements: the photograph of an airplane, a partial headline, one photograph of a group of men with a gendarme, one photograph of a man against a wall, and the drawn panel showing a close-up of Octave. Viewed independently, the elements are devoid of meaning with respect to each other (notably the airplane picture introducing the sequence) and with respect to narrative content. The recycling of newspaper headlines and photographs further engages French readers who are familiar with the events of the Algerian War and with how these events have appeared in the press and still appear in textbooks.

Rarely do press clippings constitute a major element of the *Carnets*' central plot. When they do, like when a character is reading a newspaper, they quickly shift from a diegetic level to an extra-diegetic level. Here press clippings shift from being the receipts of a character's actions to providing background information exterior to a character's thoughts and actions. Again in *Rue de la Bombe*, Sauveur informs Octave that there has been another bombing. Before he can answer Octave's questions about the incident, Marianne (Octave's cousin, also a Pied-Noir living in Algiers) shows Octave the specifics outlined in a newspaper article. The panel progresses from a diegetic situation, the discussion between Sauveur, Octave, and Marianne, to an extra-diegetic one, a newspaper clipping about the rue Michelet bombing or the second of the three planned bombings targeting European civilians in Algiers that occurred in 1956. Ferrandez's organization of panels, clippings, and other inserts on pages alerts the reader to shifts in diegesis: press clippings and similar inserts are almost entirely relegated to interstitial spaces. Regarding narrative structure, Ferrandez's usage and placement of news clippings allow him to say and show more than normally possible due to the comic book's (traditionally) limited number of pages. For editorial reasons, choices must be made regarding album content. Farid Boudjellal's short, "Amour d'Alger" [Love from Algiers], uses newspapers to a similar end. Due to the short's greatly reduced narrative space, Boudjellal's insertion of a newspaper clipping in the very first panel quickly situates the short's time, place, and historical context for the reader. Press material contextualizes narrative efficiently so that artists can situate their fictional stories within French national history without providing too much background information in other panels. Like other artists, Ferrandez and Boudjellal breathe life into archived documents, challenging readers to view them in new contexts. The inclusion of news clippings, press photographs, and documentary images are examples of diegetic bolstering. The addition of these sources contextualizes fictional conversations and provides necessary background information for the reader.

The recycling of familiar news items speaks to contemporary French readers whose memory of the Algerian War would have been partially constituted by the same documentary and press images recycled in war comics. Cartoonists do not limit their source material to photography and print material. Several comics such as the *Carnets* and Morvandiau's *D'Algérie* include examples of television and radio broadcasts dating back to the war. The inclusion of this additional audiovisual material within comics serves an analogous purpose: to authenticate an album's historical vision and to contextualize fictional narratives within French national history. The reproduction of television stills and radio broadcasts has implications for an album's visual

aesthetics and narrative voice. Jacques Ferrandez, for instance, reproduces television broadcasts of presidential addresses and news reports. One example is a report about Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal in July 1956. Stills are blue-toned and narrated using voice-overs, rather than speech balloons, in order to mimic journalists. Journalists or historical figures such as de Gaulle, and not an omniscient narrator, narrate these panels. They contrast visually with surrounding panels and are easily positioned inside or outside the main narrative structure.

*Dernière demeure* opens with de Gaulle's televised appeal to the FLN offering "la paix des braves" [peace of the braves], broadcast on October 23, 1958 during which de Gaulle petitions the FLN to surrender. The FLN declines his proposed peace agreement. This sequence of panels highlights notable moments of the presidential address. The rather lengthy speech is reduced to five succinct panels. Television stills soon give way to more typical panels in which characters are drawn watching de Gaulle's speech on a small television screen. Ferrandez's inclusion of several television broadcasts throughout the series not only creates a unique visual dynamic, it stresses the geographical distance separating French Algeria from metropolitan France where decisions about the future of French Algeria were made. If de Gaulle is shown addressing crowds in Algeria earlier in the series, his presence is reduced to televised addresses in later volumes. While Ferrandez's representation mirrors history, it emphasizes the growing divide between France and French Algeria that would eventually result in Algerian independence and France's subsequent abandonment of the Pied-Noir and Harki populations.

Characters in *Dernière demeure* and other comics studied here can read news articles in real time because the narrative chronologies of these comic books coincide with the war years. By reading the news, they discover more about themselves and their situation. Ferrandez is not the only cartoonist to use this technique (see, for example, *Le chemin de l'Amérique*, "Amour d'Alger," *Algérie française!* [French Algeria!], and *Tahya El-Djazaïr*). In other comic books, such as David B.'s *Babel 2*, the war is part of an unfamiliar past. News clippings aid protagonists in their quest for knowledge and understanding. *Babel 2*'s opening panel shows the main character (the cartoonist as a child) and his brother leafing through old issues of *Paris Match*, two of which feature the Algerian War. David B.'s comic book is not specifically about the years 1954–1962. Instead it describes the folly of war, human cruelty, and the absurdity of the human condition. As narrative progresses, war becomes a metaphor for illness: David B.'s brother suffers from epilepsy. What unites the two brothers is their obsession with history and war. After drawing several parallels between the Papuan War and his brother's battle with disease, the protagonist realizes that he too grew up in a country at war: "J'avais trois ans en 1962 lors du cessez-le-feu en Algérie et je n'en ai aucun souvenir" [I was three years old in 1962 during the ceasefire in Algeria, and I have no memory of it] (B. 2006, 56). He attributes his gap in memory to France's official amnesia or politics of forgetting about the Algerian War, a fact that made it difficult for him to complete his quest for knowledge using the press.

Images of other wars eclipsed the memory of decolonization in the press of David B.'s youth but not in everyday conversation. A three-panel sequence portrays a family dinner during which certain words such as "mort" [death], "djebel" [mountain], and "torture" [torture] are elliptically associated with "Algérie" [Algeria] (B. 2006, 57). The narrative voice-over framing this sequence (narrated by the protagonist as an adult) contextualizes bits of conversation that the protagonist as a child was unable to process. These words later fuel the protagonist's research in press archives. There are never enough images to quench his thirst for information. According to the protagonist, "[a]près 1962 il n'y en avait plus d'écho ni de trace. Au moment où [sic] je commençais à ouvrir les yeux sur le monde je n'avais pas d'images de ce conflit. . . . L'Algérie était le fantôme des conversations. Une histoire mystérieuse. Une histoire qu'il fallait surprendre" [after 1962, there were no longer any echoes or traces left. From the moment I began opening my eyes to the world, I had no pictures of this conflict. Algeria was the ghost of conversations. A mysterious history. A history that needed to be caught by surprise] (B. 2006, 57). In David B.'s narrative, press photographs function as sources of information and frustration.

Unable to satisfy his curiosity, the child protagonist takes an imaginary journey in time and space allowing him to "experience" the Algerian War as a young French soldier. Contrary to the album's preceding pages, the absence of color dominates the panel sequence in which the protagonist visualizes the war. In contrast to the simulated objective realism of reproduced press photographs, the artist relies on visual expressionism similar to Edvard Munch's paintings to depict the arrival of young, naïve soldiers in 1950s' Algeria. This stylistic choice allows David B. to emphasize the soldiers' fear of the unknown, the deplorable conditions of their deployment, and their first impressions of the Algerian landscape in addition to the artist's own sensibility to his subject. Soldiers are reduced to indistinguishable skeletons sleeping in striped chairs in the bowels of the ship's hold. David B. establishes a visual parallel between Margaret-Bourke White's photographs of Holocaust survivors and his own representation of French soldiers being sent off to war or, as their emaciated figures



imply, to a certain death. Once on land, soldiers struggling to locate and carry their duffle bags are quickly herded onto trains. The seemingly lost recruits are greeted by barking officers ordering them to grab their belongings and to board waiting trains. The scene is rendered chaotic through multiple close-ups that crowd soldiers within panels. The officers' jagged-edge speech balloons (an artistic device typically reserved for radio, television, and telephone communication) dominate the space of these panels creating a tense narrative moment again reminiscent of Holocaust imagery. Instead of focusing on significant historical events such as famous battles, speeches, and the signing of treaties, David B. offers his readers an antiwar narrative in which young dehumanized Frenchmen become disposable elements of the French nation.

Even though David B.'s narrative confronts violence and dehumanization directly, it should be noted that French schoolchildren (like the young David B.) are seldom exposed to graphic images of violence and war in the classroom. As demonstrated in chapter 1, textbook images of the Algerian War typically show de Gaulle, demonstrations orchestrated by Algeria's European population, and the Pied-Noir exodus. French cartoonists like David B. often represent violence and taboo topics in their albums, including mutilation, torture, rape, summary executions, and the French army's scorched-earth policy. Comics deliberately recycle violent images in order to unearth dark periods of France's national past, and episodes that have yet to securely anchor themselves in collective memory such as the October 17, 1961 massacre in Paris reenacted in *D'Algérie, Terre fatale*, *Le chemin de l'Amérique*, and *Octobre noir*.

Cartoonists include violent images not to engage in photojournalistic sensationalism, but rather to invite readers to recognize historical omissions and to question common visual representations of war. While drawn representations of explicitly violent acts are easier to endure than documentary photographs, they do not efface the horrors depicted by desensitizing viewers to the pain of others. According to Susan Sontag, "the hunt for more dramatic . . . images drives the photographic enterprise, and is part of the normality of a culture in which shock has become a leading stimulus of consumption and source of value" (2003, 23). Comics depicting the Algerian War propose a solution to contemporary society's desire to consume atrocity photographs by reminding readers that the war was atrocious. Susan Sontag's commentary on war photographs is quite applicable to the comics studied here: "Look, the photographs [comics] say, *this* is what it's like. This is what war *does*. . . . War tears, rends. War rips open, eviscerates. War scorches. War dismembers. War *ruins*" (2003, 8, her emphasis). In contrast to atrocity images found in the press and critiqued by Sontag, the comics studied here engage with the reader's imagination and empathy through their contextualization, narration, and personalization of events depicted. Even though readers are seeing fiction, comics and their special conflation of fiction and reality encourage readers "to hold . . . reality in mind" (Sontag 2003, 8).

Two recent comics on the Algerian War, *Dans l'ombre de Charonne* and *Octobre noir*, engage with journalism quite differently than the comics discussed above. In addition to the press clippings that contextualize narrative and economize narrative space, Désirée and Alain Frappier integrate press and archival images in such a way that allows readers to visualize the participation of various characters in historical moments. This is accomplished via the superposition of inked drawings onto actual press photographs (Figure 4.4). On one double page, Maryse and her high school friends attend the funeral of the Charonne massacre victims on February 13, 1962. Positioned behind, but still visible through, the semitransparent comic book panels is an enlarged photograph of funeral attendees. The panels lead readers to believe that Maryse and her friends were among those present. The narrative voice-over introducing the scene describes the general atmosphere: "Des centaines de milliers de personnes, de la place de la République au boulevard de Ménilmontant. C'est vachement impressionnant. Surtout le silence" [Hundreds of thousands of people, from Republic Square to Ménilmontant boulevard. It's really impressive. Especially the silence] (Frappier and Frappier 2012, 100). Despite the ensuing dialogue between Maryse and others relating the characters' experience of the funeral to those who did not attend, the aural aspect of this scene is striking. How can such a large crowd gather in absolute silence? Though press photographs could not fully communicate this fundamental aspect to readers, the merging of photographs and drawings does.



**Figure 4.4** The superposition of comic book images on actual photographs. Source: From Désirée and Alain Frappier, *Dans l'ombre de Charonne* (Paris: Éditions du Mauconduit, 2012), p. 101. © Mauconduit.

As if to criticize French news reporting in the 1960s, Daeninckx and Mako's album, *Octobre noir*, is completely devoid of press clippings and archival documentation. This editorial choice, unusual for historical comics endorsed by reputable historians, underscores the media's silence regarding October 17, 1961. Benjamin Stora's foreword confirms, stating "[d]ans la presse française de l'époque, au travers d'articles mis bout à bout apparaissent des signes manifestes d'occultation. Des journaux aussi différents que *France-Soir* ou *Le Monde*, ont d'abord minimisé l'événement" [in the French press of the time, through articles put together appear clear signs of a cover-up. Newspapers as different as *France-Soir* [France-Evening] or *Le Monde*, initially downplayed the event] (Stora 2011, 10). If newspapers like *France-Soir* and *Le Monde* eventually proposed corrections in subsequent editions, others such as *Paris Jour* [Paris Day], to quote Stora, "offrent à lire un discours tout prêt, soumis aux codes symboliques spécifiques d'une époque coloniale finissante" [offer for reading a ready-made discourse, subjugated to the specific symbolic codes of an ending colonial era] (2011, 10).

This is not to say that newspapers in favor of Algerian independence like *Libération* [Liberation] did not denounce this instance of police brutality directed at Paris's Algerian population. Given the vast number of media sources—only a minority of which were Algerian-friendly—the press could have done considerably more to inform the French reading public of the massacre. Because of the importance of print media in France, the French reading public had few opportunities to learn about the massacre if not through reported news. The silence surrounding this event has been partially lifted thanks to comics, cinema, and other works of fiction in which the event constitutes a central narrative focus, including Didier Daeninckx and Mako's comic book, *Octobre noir*, Didier Daeninckx's novel, *Meurtres pour mémoire*, Leïla Sebbar's novel, *La Seine était rouge* [The Seine was Red], Michael Haneke's film, *Caché* [Hidden], and Alain Tasma's film, *Nuit noire, 17 octobre 1961* [Black Night, October 17, 1961]. It appears that Daeninckx and Mako do not include newspaper clippings because this event was misrepresented in the press. Attempts made by public officials to revive the memory of October 17, 1961 (notably Bertrand Delanoë's commemoration of the massacre's fiftieth anniversary several months after he was elected mayor of Paris in 2001 (McCormack 2011, 1132)) and the growing number of fictional works published each year has undoubtedly led to the surfacing of this event in French collective memory. If documenting atrocity perpetuated by the State is not in the State's interest or in the interest of those financially supported by the State, it should be highlighted that newer editions of history textbooks mention the October 17, 1961 and the February 8, 1962 massacres. Cote et al. demonstrate that these events have often been confused in the media and other forms of public discourse (2012, 68). From this perspective, popular culture and comics in particular have benefited from their marginalized position in literary and cultural hierarchies in order to impose unpopular histories onto national metanarratives. To quote

comics scholar Rocco Versaci: “Like the unruly children that most people imagine are the medium’s sole readership, comic books refuse to be easily disciplined. That is, so long as comics . . . are left on the margins of literature, they may continue to surprise readers and level powerful criticisms against corporate interests, including the mainstream media” (2007, 134–35).

Unsatisfied with the press’s silence surrounding polarizing topics and events like the October 17, 1961 and February 8, 1962 massacres, other cartoonists openly criticize the lacunae of mainstream news reporting. In this respect, *Dans l’ombre de Charonne*, presents an interesting example. During the days subsequent to the Charonne massacre, readers are confronted with images of Maryse reading the press and its inaccurate representation of events. In her doctor’s waiting room, Maryse leafs through a copy of *Paris Match* whose version of February 8, 1962 does not correspond to her memory as a participant trapped in the Charonne subway station by French riot police. As she reads through the article, she interjects her recollections and criticisms through thought balloons. Attempting to rectify the magazine’s account of events, Maryse (nearly fifty years later and recorded in comic book form) offers corrections to readers of *Dans l’ombre de Charonne* who may or may not have been readers of *Paris Match* in the 1960s. The moral of the story becomes exceedingly clear near the bottom of the page when a narrative voice-over (presumably Maryse’s own voice) tells readers: “Pour la première fois de ma vie, je suis directement confrontée à ce que ma mère appelle ‘les mensonges de la presse de droite!’” [For the first time in my life, I’m directly confronted with what my mother calls “the lies of the right-wing press!”] (Frappier and Frappier 2012, 104). On the next page are the reproduced front-pages of several newspapers including *L’Humanité*, *Le Canard Enchaîné* [The Chained Duck], *Libération*, *Le Figaro*, and *L’Aurore* [Dawn]. The point of the page is to demonstrate the contradictory and sometimes censored information that appears in the press. *L’Humanité* and *Libération* sport large white spaces denoting the censoring of image and text. In case the reader fails to notice censored text, Désirée and Alain Frappier have inserted the word “CENSURÉ” [CENSORED] in large block letters alongside arrows pointing to compromised information. The narrative voice-over explains: “La presse rapporte quantité de versions contradictoires sur la manifestation, sans compter toutes celles qui sont censurées” [The press reports a number of contradictory versions of the demonstration, not counting all those that are censored] (Frappier and Frappier 2012, 105). Confronted with so much conflicting information, Maryse withdraws psychologically. Soon she can only see the gates locking her and the other protestors in the subway station—even though this particular detail remains largely contested in the press. Désirée and Alain Frappier do, however, recognize that Maryse’s memory of events can be unreliable. On the comic book’s last page (after all narrative content and textual inserts), the cartoonists signal the following erratum:

Le pont de Sèvres, représenté p. 17 et p. 51, n’a été inauguré que le premier avril 1963. Au moment du putsch, l’ancien pont de pierres, bombardé en 1943 et démonté en 1961, avait été remplacé par la passerelle en bois ci-dessus, capable de supporter bus, camions et voitures. Il est toutefois peu probable que les chars, imaginés par Maryse, aient pu l’emprunter. (Frappier and Frappier 2012, 136)

[The Sèvres bridge, pictured on pages seventeen and fifty-one, was not inaugurated until April 1, 1963. At the time of the coup, the former stone bridge, that had been bombed in 1943 and taken down in 1961, was replaced by the wooden walkway shown above; the walkway was capable of supporting buses, trucks, and cars. It’s unlikely, however, that the tanks, imagined by Maryse, could have crossed it.]

Demonstrated by their various attempts to confer a measure of historical and/or biographical authenticity on comics, cartoonists are concerned with questions of representation in this largely fictional narrative space. The inclusion of paratextual elements such as those studied here calls attention to comics as a self-reflexive or meta-cognitive medium, one that is aware of its liminal status with respect to literary and cultural hierarchies. The reliance of several cartoonists on other forms of archival documentation, including press clippings, photographs, television stills, and radio broadcasts, establishes clear relationships between history, collective memory, and cultural production, one that history teachers could potentially exploit in their classrooms, or one that could benefit individuals not easily reached by other vectors of cultural/historical transmission. The re-appropriation and re-contextualization of these sources in comics not only implicates readers already familiar with official representations of the Algerian War, this recycling invites readers to question State-scripted discourses that can influence and, at times, originate in the mass media. As a unique form of cultural production, comics can use the media to disrupt official memory making and the politics of forgetting.

## NOTES

1. See Mark McKinney’s essay, “Algerian War in *Road to America*,” for a close reading of this comic book and a detailed explanation of the narrative’s numerous “historical effects” (2008, 151).

2. See Carla Calargé’s 2010 interview with Ferrandez in which he discusses the inclusion of press clippings. He also explains other choices made regarding source materials.

3. McKinney writes about a “documentary effort, typical of the most complex and well-researched comics, [that] exemplifies the importance of the reality effect in historical comics” (2013a, 158). Here he references Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle’s “effet d’histoire” [historical effect] and Roland Barthes’ “effet de réel” [reality effect].



## Chapter 5

### Self, Other, and Self-Othering

Since cartoonists no longer have access to French Algeria, comic book representations of this nonspace and its former inhabitants suggest that cartoonists must find other sources for artistic inspiration. In previous chapters, I examined the creative and sometimes subversive appropriation of documentary materials like newspapers, iconic photographs, and other paratextual elements. Cartoonists might also choose to incorporate colonial iconography and Orientalist tropes in their attempt to create a more coherent vision of 1950s' and 1960s' Algeria. Such tropes constitute visual and narrative elements that French readers would most likely recognize as part of their colonial culture (see chapter 2). Comics, similar to other forms of cultural production, are not immune to hegemonic discourses that dictate visual and verbal representation within specific cultural contexts. Despite some cartoonists' desire to "faithfully" represent and perhaps even criticize aspects of the Algerian War and French Algeria, they still recycle the Orientalist and colonialist tropes that have been influencing how France views, understands, and relates to the Maghreb and its native peoples since the nineteenth century. In certain instances, comics can even be accused of contributing to the solidification of a neo-Orientalist discourse in France. While striving to deconstruct problematic discourses on the war and colonialism, comics nevertheless reinforce other discourses related to French perceptions of North Africa. This is problematic in that Orientalism and colonialism in the "Orient" are two sides of the same coin. Robert J.C. Young maintains, "it is not uncommon today to find cultural critics using the term 'Orientalism' as a synonym for 'colonialism'" (1995, 166).

Edward Said's theorization of Orientalism in the late 1970s demonstrates that Western perceptions of the East are based on stereotypes that denigrate the latter in order to elevate the former. Defining the Orient and the Oriental as "irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'" justifies the West in seeing itself as "rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal'" (Said 1979, 40). Colonial manifestations of Orientalism engender the belief in Western cultural hegemony. Central to the Orientalist aesthetic are military campaigns, "exotic" architecture devoid of neoclassical motifs (even if some nineteenth-century artists considered the Orient a new Rome), Arab beauty and eroticism, the East as biblical (i.e., the Palestinian model), but also decadence and disease. Notwithstanding deconstructionist critiques of Orientalism starting with Said, this patronizing attitude remains an integral part of France's cultural history. The cartoonists studied here who recycle such aesthetics in their work consequently create a distinct tension between the anticolonialist word and the colonialist/Orientalist image. Yet their reworking of this iconography also has the potential to articulate a neo-Orientalist discourse. In this chapter, I focus on the recycling of Orientalist tropes in comic book representations of the colonial Other, and, in the next chapter, I look at the medium's recreation of urban and rural colonial spaces. Particular emphasis is placed on how cartoonists have reshaped their "inherited" Orientalist tradition in postcolonial narratives via a strategic re-appropriation of specific visual themes.

Nineteenth-century Orientalist painting has influenced cartoonists working on the Algerian War. Jacques Ferrandez even described the appeal of the movement's visual motifs during our 2009 interview. The entire *Carnets d'Orient* series differs from other comics studied here due to its representation of French Algerian history from conquest (1830) to decolonization (1962). Ferrandez explained during a personal conversation that he spent several hours studying the Orientalist collection at the d'Orsay Museum in Paris prior to drafting the first volume of his series. His watercolors, sketches, and illustrations recall the canvases of Eugène Delacroix and Eugène Fromentin among others. The title of the first album, which later became that of the series,<sup>1</sup> refers to the travelogues of Joseph Constant, an artist partially modeled after Delacroix (McKinney 2001, 44).<sup>2</sup> Ferrandez commented elsewhere on the content of his first album, stating that it is based on period travel journals of notable Orientalist painters and writers from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Ferrandez 2002, 63).

If Ferrandez understands the problems associated with Orientalism and its representation of the colonial



Other, he admitted during our interview that Orientalist aesthetics have nevertheless shaped his perception of the Orient. How could his vision of (French) Algeria not reflect that of his French cultural heritage? Given the importance of Orientalist aesthetics in French art and literary history, Ferrandez's target audience would expect a certain representation of Algeria in an album whose title carries considerable thematic weight.<sup>3</sup> To some degree, these readers are not disappointed. Orientalist paintings depicting the harem, Moorish architecture, and Arab barbarism permeate the series.

Art historian Linda Nochlin argues in *The Politics of Vision* that Orientalist artists like Jean-Léon Gérôme and Eugène Delacroix (and perhaps Ferrandez?) have used realism to conceal colonialist ideologies and to produce meaning that reinforces Western stereotypes of the Orient (1989, 38–39). The fact that Joseph Constant paints his canvases upon returning to Paris emphasizes just how artificial his representation of the Orient actually is. His paintings are physically and aesthetically distant from his subject matter (McKinney 2001, 46). The same distance separates Ferrandez's art from his subject. The gap between artifice and reality in the *Carnets* causes the reader to ask questions concerning the recycling of Orientalist tropes in his arguably anticolonialist series. Mark McKinney writes, "orientalism may, and often does, function as a discourse that ultimately limits criticism—even when a generously minded critique of colonialism is (also) attempted, as is the case in Ferrandez's comic books" (2013a, 55, his emphasis).

Edward Said's analysis of Orientalist literature and art demonstrates that they are a representation rather than a natural depiction of the Orient. Of course all art and literature are representations. However, Orientalism is governed by the specific conviction that the West must represent the Orient because the Orient is incapable of representing itself (Said 1979, 21). Said's reading of Orientalism underscores a strict binary opposition juxtaposing East and West, resulting in an Us/Them dialectic. Said understands Orientalism as a "one-way exchange" in which the Orientalist observes and records the Orient, never the other way around (1979, 160). By reducing Orientalism to this dichotomy, Said minimizes the importance of the aesthetics' cross-cultural nature and implicit hybridism. As extremely self-conscious media of cultural production and memory, comics offer a window onto important questions: to what degree did the Orient influence Orientalists and how does the Orient perceive its "orientalization?"<sup>4</sup> Writing about collections of Orientalist paintings in the East, art historian Roger Benjamin states: "Orientalism is no longer a one-way journey, a stream of visions frozen by European travelers and carted home for consumption, without reference to the responses of those objectified in the process" (2003, 4). While Ferrandez's re-appropriation of Orientalist tropes is thematically significant, it is likewise important to recognize that Algerian cartoonists also re-appropriate the same tropes in their work, but for different reasons.

Sid Ali Melouah's *Pierrot de Bab el Oued* [Pierrot from Bab El Oued] provides a noteworthy example of caricatures of the "Oriental" for two reasons: (1) the narrative is told through the eyes of a Pied-Noir; and (2) the (Algerian) cartoonist parodies Orientalist perceptions of the native Algerian population. Melouah exaggerates Orientalist representations of the Oriental to produce a comic effect. The narrative begins with a flashback of Pierrot (a Pied-Noir) and Ali's (a Harki) first meeting when they were children living in Algiers. Ali's father works for the French government and comes to the prefect's palace to enroll his son in school. Melouah's depiction of the father figure is ridiculous: he uses an exaggerated military salute to greet the prefect, he presents two live calves as gifts (so that he may "présente[r] [s]es meilleurs veaux" [present his best calves] (2003, 3)),<sup>5</sup> he misunderstands questions and expressions, and he does not know how to use the telephone. Clever puns, stereotypes, and physical comedy dominate the scene. When learning how to use the telephone, for example, Ali's father is concerned that he will not be able to talk since he must hold the receiver with one hand and dial with the other. A common joke is that Arab men cannot speak without making elaborate hand gestures. Melouah uses Orientalist tropes such as backwardness and primitiveness to create a comedic tone and to produce a caricature of France's colonial Other. Self-derision permeates the comic book, allowing the cartoonist to criticize certain aspects of contemporary Algerian society such as the *trabendistes*,<sup>6</sup> the corruption of public officials, and the FLN. In one panel, the adult Pierrot dines in a restaurant whose name has been changed from "Anatole France" to "Anatole Algérie" (Melouah 2003, 22). The idea communicated is that the FLN only made cosmetic changes to the country after independence.

Melouah's contribution is worth mentioning due to his focus on *frontaliers* or characters marked by cultural hybridism. In turn, each of these characters parodies emblematic figures in French and Algerian collective memory such as the Pied-Noir, the Tuareg, and the French tourist. Pierrot is a Pied-Noir whose family left Algeria in 1962. When he reaches adulthood, he finds himself plagued by feelings of loss that motivate his decision to revisit his childhood home. As the son of a Harki, Ali was also forced to leave Algeria at the end of the war. Searching for reasons why his father left, he too returns to Algeria. By highlighting the experience of two individuals who have been equally influenced by East and West, Melouah narrates a different story



than that told by other Algerian cartoonists.<sup>7</sup> During their short visit in the autumn of 1988, Pierrot and Ali reunite and realize that Algeria has changed considerably since their departure twenty-six years prior. Satisfied with the experience, they both decide to return to France. Their visit incidentally coincides with the 1988 October riots that eventually led to the end of Algeria's single-party system. The political climate at the end of the comic book mirrors that of 1962 (when Pierrot and Ali first left Algeria) with street-level riots, civil unrest, and bloodshed. No longer able to identify with the Algeria they once knew, Pierrot and Ali leave the country. Interestingly, Pierrot's travel companion, a Parisian who had never been to Algeria before this trip, decides to remain in Algiers. Although this nameless character falls in love with the Tuareg woman who rescues him and Pierrot during one of their misadventures, his desire to stay does not reflect the Orientalist trope of the Orient as a place of unbridled passion. Rather Melouah channels hope into the Algerian saga through this unlikely union. Amidst more realistic illustrations depicting the October 1988 riots, emerges a new love story between France (the Parisian) and one of Algeria's ethnic minorities (the Tuareg).

One could argue that Melouah's partial recycling of Orientalist tropes stems from his spatial separation from Algeria. Fearing retaliation from Islamists, the cartoonist sought voluntary exile in France where he continued to publish comics, editorial cartoons, and caricatures inspired by the Algerian Civil War and Algeria's declining political situation. Did Melouah's close contact with French culture "contaminate" his vision of Algeria? I maintain that Melouah uses his knowledge of Orientalism and French culture to explore the identity of marginalized memory communities like the Pieds-Noirs, the Harkis, and the Tuaregs. All three communities are caricatured to some degree for the sake of comic relief. More important are his historical representations of the Algerian War, independence, and October 1988. During these moments, a perceptible shift occurs with respect to Melouah's drawing style. Highly stylized or "cartoony" illustrations form the core narrative (Pierrot's return to Algeria) while more realistic drawings depicting historical events constitute the background plot. *Pierrot de Bab el Oued* has two levels of narration: one fictional in which Melouah plays with conventional representations and stereotypes and the other historical in which photojournalistic realism takes precedence.

Devoid of Melouah's narrative division based on a combination of parodied and realistic images, the *Carnets* are realistic from an aesthetic perspective in their representation of history and people. If narrative objectivity is one of Ferrandez's goals, then his recycling of Orientalist tropes should have doomed his project from its conception. Yet like Melouah, Ferrandez can also claim "insider" status due to his Pied-Noir heritage. With each successive generation born on Algerian soil, the Pieds-Noirs further solidified their own Algerian identity and culture so that by 1962 they no longer resembled their metropolitan cousins. As Ferrandez grew up in France, he was equally influenced by his Pied-Noir heritage and French education. Ferrandez's relationship to Orientalism is ambiguous because he is writing from both inside and outside the Orient. According to Edward Said, "the Orientalist is outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact" (1979, 21). Instead of capitalizing on Orientalist discourse, Ferrandez's usage of colonial postcards and Orientalist painting allows him to understand and question his cultural heritage. At the end of *Djemilab* before the painter Constant sets sail for France, another painter tells him, "la peinture est insuffisante à traduire ce qui relève de la mystique, de la tentation, de la promesse" [painting insufficiently translates that which pertains to the mystical, temptation, promise] (Ferrandez 2008, 69). As if to prove the validity of this statement, the next two pages depict Constant struggling to recapture the Orient in his Parisian studio. When his attempts fail, he leafs through his sketchbook in the album's final panels. For the artist, his sketchbook is the only "unmediated, authentic" representation of Algeria left in his possession (McKinney 2001, 46).

As Mark McKinney observes, the first cycle of the series includes several critical discussions about nineteenth-century Orientalist painting. When one of the central Pied-Noir protagonists, Marianne, who reaches adulthood in 1950s' Algeria and who later inherits Constant's journal, retraces the artist's Algerian itinerary, she rediscovers the beauty of Algeria's rural landscapes and people. The juxtaposition between what she sees and how Algeria has been represented in painting confuses her: "C'est ça qui m'étonne: comment tous ces peintres qui ont fait le voyage et pris des croquis sur place ont pu donner de retour dans leurs ateliers une représentation de l'Orient aussi artificielle?" [That's what surprises me: how were all these painters, who traveled and made sketches on site, able to return to their workshops and make such an artificial representation of the Orient?] (Ferrandez 2008, 340). Even though Ferrandez eliminates such commentaries from the second cycle, his desire for authenticity remains, emanating from his inclusion of historical documentation and professional endorsements (see chapters 3 and 4).

Ferrandez's ambiguous relationship with Orientalism produces an irreconcilable tension within his narrative: "the real danger with hewing too close to colonial sources," Mark McKinney contends, ". . . lies in the cartoonist's tendency to reproduce the imperialist ideology contained in them" (2001, 46). This tension also affects Ferrandez's Western readers who are susceptible to Western aesthetic traditions like Orientalism, even

though they are viewing the series from a postcolonial perspective in which East and West are deconstructed concepts. McKinney questions Ferrandez's critique of Orientalist painting due to his recycling of erotic postcards whose female subjects become prostitutes in his narrative. Why would Ferrandez include critical dialogue centered on Orientalist painting but not on colonial photography and postcards (McKinney 2001, 49)? Regarding the first half of Ferrandez's series, McKinney remains critical of the cartoonist's inclusion of "borrowed material," that the comics scholar describes as "a recuperative *commemoration* of French Algeria [. . . that] fundamentally limits his [Ferrandez's] attempts to diverge from certain aspects of colonial society and the aesthetic movements that it helped to foster" (2013a, 56, his emphasis; see also McKinney 2001, 45). Although I agree with McKinney's assessment (especially with respect to the first half of Ferrandez's series), Ferrandez has shown that he is able to engage with Orientalist representations of indigenous women in a distinctly postcolonial and feminist manner, one that serves to address the Orientalist/anticolonialist tension in narrative.<sup>8</sup>

How do Ferrandez and other cartoonists work through this representational tension? If Ferrandez's reproduction of specific Orientalist tropes serves to critique both aesthetics and colonialism, his reproduction of other tropes perpetuates notions of Western cultural hegemony. Jennifer Meagher with the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art posits that the most popular Orientalist scene reproduced in paintings and postcards is the harem, normally forbidden to the Western gaze (2004). In the *Carnets'* first cycle, Ferrandez recycles colonial postcards, taken from Malek Alloula's *Le harem colonial* [The Colonial Harem], to create stock characters, usually prostitutes (McKinney 2001, 49). Alloula's presentation of erotic postcards demonstrates that they are metaphors for sexual conquest. Postcards allow Western viewers to "collect" unveiled and partially nude Arab women. In his analysis of Ferrandez's use of colonial postcards in the first half of the series, McKinney posits that Ferrandez's recycling of these iconographic sources "limits his ability or willingness to critique certain aspects of colonial society and the aesthetic movements that it helped to foster" (2001, 45). The series' first cycle, which depicts the conquest and colonization of Algeria from 1830 until 1954, aims to illustrate the history of French Algeria to a predominantly French audience. The colonial Other fades into the background as the series progresses in order to focus on the French presence in Algeria. While Ferrandez does not openly critique certain aspects of colonial society, his re-appropriation of Orientalist tropes such as the harem and Eastern sensuality creates a narrative window from which an interesting dynamic emerges between the colonizer and the colonized, between the European male and the indigenous female.

In *Le centenaire* [The Centenary] (the fourth volume of the first cycle), Paul (Octave's biological father) recalls a sexual encounter with an Algerian prostitute named Naïma. This scene stands out from the page's other panels due to Ferrandez's use of watercolors. These images are softer and more fluid than the preceding inked panels. Although his aesthetic choice calls attention to a chronological shift in narration (the sequence constitutes a flashback), it allows Ferrandez to show less detail, underscoring the scene's romantic (not erotic) orientation. In this scene, Paul begins with a description of Naïma's beauty and body. His narrative voice soon gives way to Naïma's, which elucidates how she became a prostitute. She explains that her father arranged her marriage to an older man when she was only thirteen years old. Her husband, whom she had never met before the wedding, began beating her once they were married. Attempting to avoid one bad situation, she found another in the brothel: "mais maintenant je peux plus bouger d'ici. Si mes frères ils savent ce que je fais, ils me cassent la tête" [but now I can't leave here anymore. If my brothers learn what I do, they'll kill me] (Ferrandez 2008, 221). This flashback scene recycles the Orientalist aesthetic of Arab beauty in the unveiled, reclining Naïma. However, Paul in his remembrance of possibly his first sexual experience concentrates more on Naïma and her tragic story than on the sex act itself. Even though Ferrandez uses Alloula's postcards as fodder for the album's visual representation of Arab women, his particular usage is not always emblematic of Orientalist and colonialist discourses. I therefore disagree with McKinney's argument that Ferrandez's representation of Naïma is not liberating:

By putting Naïma on the front cover of his book, Ferrandez may seem to liberate her from the bordello to which she had been relegated within narrative, but the main effect of the cartoonist's gesture is to expose her for the (male) French reader, just as colonial photographers did by publishing the postcard originals. (McKinney 2001, 48)

I interpret Ferrandez's representation differently. Even though the cover image might serve to attract (male) readers using an eroticized female Other, Ferrandez's ensuing narrative has the opposite effect. In the scene described above, Ferrandez gives voice to the Algerian prostitute much in the same way as Assia Djebar in her collection of short stories, *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* [Women from Algiers in Their Apartment]. Cultural critic Robert J.C. Young explains that because the subaltern colonized woman is often written about, "to write her history has to involve a particular effort of retrieval, or, in the case of fiction . . . a particular effort

of historical imagination" (1995, 162).

What appears more problematic, at least to this reader, is Ferrandez's continued recuperation of Orientalist motifs in his representation of decolonization. In the *Carnets'* second cycle, Ferrandez recycles the Orientalist aesthetic by frequently representing Samia in the nude.<sup>9</sup> Whereas one interpretation of Islam dictates that women are to be veiled as a measure of protection against men's inability to control their own sexual impulses, Westerners have interpreted the veil as a source of erotica. Women are veiled so as to invite unveiling. Orientalist painting and colonialist photography have thus become objects of criticism for postcolonial women writers such as Assia Djebar and Leïla Sebbar. In *La guerre fantôme*, after a morning swim with her Pied-Noir friends, Samia goes to a secluded area of the beach to change out of her bathing suit. Unbeknownst to her, two of her male companions—incidentally the two most racist of the group—watch her undress. Their trespassing gaze never violates Marianne, a Pied-Noir and the only other female present in this scene. Content analyses have shown that comics contain a high degree of political conservatism, crime, ethnocentrism, violence, and sex (Wigand 1986, 39). One could therefore argue that Ferrandez's representation of the unclothed Samia reflects general tendencies in comics. However, Marianne and other European women are never drawn unclothed in the series' second cycle. Marianne does pose in the nude for a male painter in the first cycle, but her nudity differs from that of Arab women in that she chooses to reveal her body to the male gaze. Ferrandez gives Marianne, not Samia, corporal agency.

Samia is victimized several times throughout the series. In *Rue de la Bombe*, Samia travels to the countryside after French paratroopers question her about her involvement with the FLN. Bouzid, an FLN militant unconvinced of her loyalty, rips open her shirt to see if the French tortured or mutilated her during her interrogation. *La fille du Djebel Amour* opens with illustrations of Samia, naked and bound, in an FLN hideaway. On his way to rescue her several panels later, Octave visualizes her sleeping in the nude after having intercourse with her. Finally, in *Dernière demeure*, a half-clothed Samia once again becomes the object of Bouzid's voyeurism when he enters her bedroom. This nocturnal visit is followed by a second when Octave enters and has consensual sex with her. The scene's last panel shows Octave cupping Samia's breast in his hand. As these examples demonstrate, Ferrandez uses Samia to channel eroticism into the series. Although Bouzid's voyeurism criticizes the violation of women's rights in Algeria—these panels might engender feelings of injustice and outrage in the reader because his advances are uninvited and violent—, colonial erotica partially dictates Octave's objectification of Samia. As the declining political climate threatens to efface French Algeria, Octave begins to regard Samia as a potential replacement, transforming her into an allegory for Algeria. Women frequently appear as allegories for Algeria in Pied-Noir and Algerian literature. Two examples are Kateb Yacine's *Nedjma* and Assia Djebar's *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement*. In *L'an V de la révolution algérienne* [Year Five of the Algerian Revolution], psychiatrist Frantz Fanon establishes a parallel between the oppression of Algerian women and the French colonization of Algeria, elucidating why Algerian women are often metaphors for Algeria in French and Algerian cultural production: "On voit . . . la fille algérienne, illettrée, voilée, stoppée, comme l'Algérie tout entière par la domination coloniale" [One sees the Algerian girl, illiterate, veiled, blocked, like all of Algeria under colonial domination] (1959, 95).

Though Samia is eroticized in ways that recapitulate patriarchal colonial conquest, she emerges as having a significant amount of agency. Samia freely navigates both colonial and indigenous spaces, speaks fluent French and Arabic, and even alters her appearance by dyeing her hair blond and alternately dressing in European and traditional Algerian attire. In the final volume of the series (*Terre fatale*), Octave finds her in the Djebel Amour where she was in hiding. Here her hair has been cropped and dyed with henna. When Octave reunites with her, she is dressed in men's clothing, which serves to conceal her identity and pregnancy. At the outset of *Terre fatale*, Samia resembles Isabelle Eberhardt who appears in *Les fils du Sud* (the third volume of the first cycle). Eberhardt was a nineteenth-century Swiss travel writer who spent considerable time in French North Africa and later converted to Islam. According to Jean-Robert Henry, Eberhardt belongs to a special category of historical figures deemed "*frontaliers*" with respect to French and Maghrebi culture (1991, 304). These figures act as mediators between the two cultures and emblemize the potential for cross-cultural understanding and cooperation. Even though this potential was never realized on Algerian soil (as evidenced by the outbreak of the Algerian War), Eberhardt is visually and symbolically reincarnated as Samia in Ferrandez's series. As one of the central mediating characters, Samia's objectification signifies more than the recycling of colonial eroticism. By violating her, the other characters (both French and Algerian) create a space in which dialogue is no longer possible and in which systems of communication begin to break down.

Representations of a sexual Samia disappear in the final volume, *Terre fatale*, when she gives birth to her and Octave's son. By drawing Samia bare-breasted in this album, Ferrandez no longer emphasizes her sexuality in a colonial erotic fashion, but rather her new maternal role. In addition to gendered conquest imagery and its many iterations throughout European colonization (i.e., colonies as females to be penetrated by European

powers), this new representation of Samia is reminiscent of Delacroix's 1863 painting *La Liberté guidant le peuple* [Liberty Leading the People] in which a half-clad female allegorizes Liberty during the French Revolution. Liberty's exposed chest is doubly significant, recalling classical representations of the human form and suggesting that Liberty (as a woman) literally feeds France's citizens. Similarly, Samia nurses, figuratively and literally, a new generation of citizens born from the fusion of France (Octave) and Algeria (Samia). Samia and Octave's son symbolizes a positive future for Franco-Algerian relations.

While Octave and Samia's emblematic union is the most developed in the series, other unions exist that are equally representative of Ferrandez's utopian vision of French Algeria. One prominent example is Joseph Constant's relationship with Djemilah (an Algerian woman who lives in a harem and with whom Constant falls in love) in the first volume of the *Carnets* (McKinney 1997, 172–74; McKinney 2013a, 62–72). Even though Joseph and Djemilah never have children, their story becomes an integral part of Franco-Algerian cultural history through Constant's travelogues, his portrait of Djemilah, and their shared tomb in the Casbah's princesses' cemetery (McKinney 1997, 174; McKinney 2013a, 62–72). From a structural point of view, their story opens and closes the *Carnets*' first cycle and provides Ferrandez with a narrative hook in the second cycle: Samia and Octave take over where Djemilah and Constant left off. Rather than accentuate the Orient as a place of “untiring sensuality, unlimited desire” (Said 1979, 188), Ferrandez weaves a Shakespearean tragedy complete with war, death, and star-crossed lovers. Jean-Robert Henry posits the following concerning interracial sex in colonial and postcolonial literature: “La littérature coloniale ainsi que les littératures postérieures à l'indépendance offrent de nombreuses illustrations de cette quête à la fois ardente et tragique de l'union des corps qui n'ouvre que rarement sur un dialogue serein avec l'autre société” [Colonial literature and postindependence literatures provide numerous illustrations of this quest, simultaneously fervent and tragic, for the union of bodies that initiates, only rarely, a peaceful dialogue with the other society] (1991, 307).

Ferrandez is not alone in his representation of mixed-race couples defined by Jean-Robert Henry as “frontaliers” de l'espace franco-maghrébin” [“frontaliers” of the Franco-Maghrebi space] (1991, 301). They appear in several comics presented here including *Azrayen*, *Tahya El-Djazair*, and *Jambon-Beur*. The first of these publications narrates the search for a lost patrol in Kabylia and, specifically, the patrol's commander Francis Messonnier. In their search for the missing patrol, a young Kabyle woman and schoolteacher, Taklhit Allilat, is questioned and forced to participate due to her personal relationship with Messonnier: they were lovers. In contrast to Ferrandez, who always presents flashbacks of sexual encounters from Octave's perspective—when Octave fantasizes about Samia—the reader of Lax and Giroud's *Azrayen* views similar flashbacks, but from Taklhit's perspective. *Azrayen* is organized around Messonnier's absence, and thus Messonnier cannot objectify Taklhit. She remains a strong female presence throughout the narrative, defending herself against the lewd remarks and misogyny of her travel companions. She also defends her country and culture during frequent ideological debates with French officers. In this way, Lax and Giroud re-imagine the colonial Other as an educated, independent woman who speaks for those who cannot speak for themselves like the numerous villagers that the patrol's passage terrorizes in the search for Messonnier.



**Figure 5.1** Taklhit changes into a traditional Kabyle costume. Source: From Frank Giroud and Lax, *Azrayen* (Paris: Dupuis Aire Libre, 2008), p. 65. © Dupuis.

When Taklhit leaves the patrol of her own volition, she exchanges her European clothes for a traditional Kabyle costume (Figure 5.1). Her costume change is visually arresting because her colorful new attire stands out from the drab sepia tones dominating the comic book. Her change is thematically significant because it articulates her desire to return “home,” to her family and cultural heritage. Her relationship with Messonnier, altered after the Val Doré incident, makes her realize that any long-lasting union with the French is unrealistic. Following orders, Messonnier and his fellow officers locked suspected members of the FLN in a



fermentation tank at the Val Doré vineyard overnight. Before they could be interrogated, all suspects had succumbed to asphyxiation. After accepting Messonnier's departure and the end of their relationship, Taklhit fully embraces her Kabyle self. As suggested in narrative, the French characters (military personnel) fail to take her self-othering seriously because she never fits their perception of the colonial female Other. They interpret her change of clothing as yet another act of defiance rather than as a cultural re-identification. After the surprise of seeing the "new" Taklhit, a soldier's reaction is reduced to "?! " in a speech balloon (Giroud and Lax 2008, 65). He later asks: "Où . . . où avez-vous trouvé ces vêtements?" [Where . . . where did you find these clothes?]; to which she replies: "Je les ai échangés contre mon déguisement européen" [I swapped them for my European disguise] (Giroud and Lax 2008, 65). She then refuses his offer to drive her home and definitively exits narrative. Her departure marks the end of the first volume. The only characters who appear to understand the symbolism of her gesture are two young Kabyle children watching from afar. They recite Kabyle poetry as she disappears from view. Throughout the first volume, Taklhit is an eyewitness to acts of French brutality targeting defenseless people including the near rape of an adolescent girl and remembers the crimes committed at Val Doré. While not directly stated, Taklhit distances herself from the French ideals she once taught to her students. Her experience of the exploitative nature of the colonial system provokes the complete rejection of her Europeanized self, resulting in her dramatic farewell at the end of the first volume.

The central plot of *Tabya El-Djazair* revolves around the arrival of Paul, a French schoolteacher and World War II veteran, in Algeria where he will be teaching French history to Arab children as a *coopérant*.<sup>10</sup> After a heartfelt reunion with a former brother-in-arms (Amine), Paul falls under the charm of Asia, Amine's eldest daughter. Paul and Asia's friendship eventually develops into a romantic relationship based on common interests (both are film enthusiasts) and mutual attraction. Current events soon reveal, however, that they differ ideologically. Failing to see similarities between his past wartime activities and those of the Algerian nationalists, he tries to prevent Asia from reacting to the human rights' violations that have become commonplace in French Algeria. After their first date, for instance, Paul and Asia witness a group of Pieds-Noirs (at the head of which is a representative of the law, a gendarme) physically assaulting an Arab Algerian, accusing him of terrorism. The Arab's ethnicity appears to be his only "crime."

The more time Paul and Asia spend together, the more Paul learns about the hidden realities of colonialism. While visiting her mother's grave, Asia recalls the May 8, 1945 protests organized in urban centers across Algeria in favor of independence and where Asia's mother lost her life. Although Asia describes the event as a celebration of Nazi Germany's surrender, she explains that the visible presence of Algerian nationalists led to the gathering's tragic conclusion and to the awakening of her own political consciousness. The complete solidification of her political ideals occurs later in the comic book when her father is falsely accused of planting a bomb at his former place of employment. Paul, however, takes longer to understand the sociopolitical situation in French Algeria of the late 1950s. Perhaps due to his military background, Paul often sides with his paratrooper friends until he witnesses and finally understands the dehumanizing effects of colonization on both colonizer and colonized. His discovery of the torture and rape taking place at the Villa Sesini where Asia is detained causes him to detach from French "civilization" as the first volume ends.

At the beginning of the second volume, readers learn that Asia and Paul are living in Les Aurès, a remote region of Algeria, with their infant son, Hocine. Contrary to the situation of couples such as Octave/Samia and Messonnier/Taklhit, whose romantic involvement is laden with political symbolism, Paul and Asia's relationship results in neither the utopian union of France and Algeria (Octave/Samia) nor their inevitable separation (Messonnier/Taklhit) through which Algeria (Taklhit) reclaims its cultural patrimony. Rather than disseminate founding mythologies, Dan and Galandon eliminate Asia and Paul (but not Hocine) as characters of the series. Asia's death results in a misunderstanding: Paul first believes that the FLN—and not the French—murdered his wife. Despite his initial desire to remain politically distant from the Algerian events, Paul eventually enlists in the French army and later, after discovering the truth about Asia's death, joins forces with the FLN. The series ends once the French kill Paul and bury the truth under false reports appearing in newspapers such as *L'Écho d'Alger*: "Paul Guénot, instituteur au collège français d'Alger, otage des fellaghas, [a été re]trouvé abattu dans les Aurès" [Paul Guénot, a teacher at the French middle school in Algiers and hostage to Algerian guerrillas, was found shot dead in Les Aurès] (Dan and Galandon 2010, 47).

Highlighting the perpetuation of falsified information in the press has two purposes. Firstly, Dan and Galandon openly contest the myth of journalism's objectivity and underscore that the mass media regularly circulate information provided by the State (here the military). Secondly, the newspaper article provides narrative continuity between a series of panels as well as between past (the war) and present (2002). As he reads the article in the past, Amine is filled with great despair as his orphaned grandson plays nearby. The final page returns readers to the narrative present when Hocine, now a man, questions his uncle about the Algerian War's lost generation to which his father, Paul, belongs. His uncle responds: "toute guerre a ses

oubliés . . . et trop de tabous étouffent encore la nôtre” [every war has its forgotten people . . . and too many taboos still stifle ours] (Dan and Galandon 2010, 48). As the narrative voice-over fades, the reader moves with the image from the war memorial in Algiers to Paul and Asia’s final resting spot deep in the Algerian countryside. If Hocine survives the war and is able to transmit the memory of the war’s lost generation (his family’s memory of the war) to others, Dan and Galandon’s conclusion suggests the coexistence of other historical perspectives that remain in the shadows of dominant discourse.

*Jambon-Beur* presents a novel perspective on biracial couples.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps owing to Boudjellal’s own cultural heritage (as the son of Algerian/Armenian immigrants living in France), he projects a different vision of Franco-Algerian unions. Male and female roles are reversed: an Arab man (Mahmoud) marries a French woman (Patricia). Boudjellal’s album is provocative in that it plays with stereotypes of France’s marginalized populations, namely Maghrebi immigrants. Before meeting Mahmoud, Patricia’s mother feels confident that she raised her daughter to choose the “perfect” husband: “Éliane sait que sa fille a choisi le gendre idéal . . . Il n’est ni arabe, ni handicapé, ni chômeur” [Éliane knows that her daughter chose the ideal son-in-law. . . . He’s not Arab, handicapped, or unemployed] (Boudjellal 1995, 7). Much to her mother’s dismay, Mahmoud is all three: Arab, handicapped, and unemployed. But instead of emphasizing the exotic in their relationship, the artist suggests that Patricia and Mahmoud are a reflection of contemporary French society, which is increasingly more multicultural and diverse. In addition to Patricia and Mahmoud are Djamila (Mahmoud’s sister) and René (her Senegalese husband). Boudjellal includes biracial couples in his comic book to enhance social realism. His underlying message is one of tolerance and acceptance. Mahmoud’s parents, despite their initial objections to Patricia, accept his decision as well as Djamila’s for fear of losing another child: “le souvenir de Latifa leur fille aînée empêche les parents de trop insister . . . Enceinte d’un Français, elle s’est suicidée par peur de la colère de son père” [the memory of Latifa their eldest daughter prevented the parents from insisting too much . . . . Knocked up by a Frenchman and fearing her father’s wrath, she committed suicide] (Boudjellal 1995, 9).

Charlotte-Badia’s personality splits when she senses that her cultural hybridism is problematic and undesirable. Instead of embracing her unique identity and individual character, Charlotte-Badia (Mahmoud and Patricia’s only daughter) perceives her difference with respect to her friends and family. One way this difference can be resolved is if she completely assimilates one of two antithetical identities. Unable to choose, Charlotte-Badia splits into Charlotte and Badia (McKinney 1997, 182). A similar dualism occurs with Djamila and René’s biracial twin boys, Moussa who is white and Mathieu who is black. If the boys are already doubled as twins, they establish unexpected relationships with other children: Moussa chooses black friends while Mathieu’s friends are white (McKinney 1997, 181; Miller 2007a, 264; Miller 2007b, 172). As the adult protagonists comment on their children’s behavior, it becomes evident to the reader that children are initially immune to cultural and racial difference. Once their differences are pointed out to them, children like Charlotte-Badia begin to ingest parental discourse without fully understanding it. Charlotte-Badia becomes whole again when her grandparents reconcile their differences and accept her hybrid identity (McKinney 1997, 183). With his focus on 1980s’ France and biracial children, Boudjellal’s representation of mixed couples differs from that of other cartoonists working on the Algerian War. Instead of symbolizing the potential of Franco-Algerian relations in harmonized couples living in former French Algeria like Octave and Samia, Messonnier and Taklhit, or Paul and Asia, Boudjellal explores the impact of the Algerian War and Maghrebi immigration on French identity today.

In spite of Boudjellal’s relatively optimistic representation of biracial couples, sexuality and the Orient remain anchored in Orientalist thought. And they continue to influence contemporary French perceptions of the Maghreb and of Maghrebis as evidenced by certain representations of Samia in the *Carnets* and of young Arab women in *Azrayen*’ (with the exception of Taklhit). Joseph Constant writes at the end of the first volume of *Carnets d’Orient*: “L’Orient est une femme que nous voulons prendre et posséder en allant jusqu’au viol . . . L’Orient est une femme qui nous échappera toujours” [The Orient is a woman that we want to take and possess going as far as rape. . . . The Orient is a woman who will always elude us] (Ferrandez 2008, 72). Constant’s emphasis on “rape” captures two Orientalist themes: domination—rape is more about power than sexual gratification—and lascivious women. The fact that a sexual element is still present in the *Carnets* and *Azrayen*’ does not signify a definitive alignment with colonial ideology and nostalgia for French Algeria. The eroticization of Arab women in these albums is either symbolic (as in Samia’s case) or creates a reality effect.

Desiring to produce a narrative embossed in historical verisimilitude, artists must represent multiple viewpoints even if some are incongruent with their own. Because rape is a common war crime (one that often goes unreported and/or unprosecuted), it is logical that Ferrandez, Lax and Giroud, and Dan and Galandon incorporate this crime into their narratives. In her analysis, literary scholar Névine El Nossery reminds readers that rape, excluded from the Nuremberg Principles, was not recognized as a war crime until 1946 during the



International Military Tribunal for the Far East (2012, 142). In *Azrayen*, for example, French soldiers rip off an adolescent girl's clothing and nearly violate her before being called away. In the first volume of *Tahya El-Djazaïr*, French paratroopers gang rape a female character at the Villa Sesini where her younger brothers, both children, were being detained. Later, paratroopers threaten to rape a man's young daughter if he refuses to provide much needed information. Sexual violence is a persistent motif in war literature. And, as the above examples demonstrate, war comics are no exception.

In addition to romantic relationships and sexual violence, comics include other examples of sexuality such as sexual deviance and promiscuity. Said notes that "the Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe" (1979, 190). Perhaps not on Said's radar were Pied-Noir women who are objectified and "othered" in some of the comics studied here. While not all Pieds-Noirs supported the OAS, this organization created a negative image of the Pied-Noir population in metropolitan France, one that the media and politicians publicly recognized. Pierre Nora's *Les Français d'Algérie* [The French of Algeria] was instrumental in articulating this difference between the French of Algeria and the French of France. According to Nora, colonial structures of domination perverted the settler population, resulting in a decadent subculture dependent on the continued exploitation of Algeria and the Algerian people without which the Pied-Noir population would fail to thrive.

Unflattering representations of the Pied-Noir soon began to appear in literature and popular culture, highlighting colonial corruption and licentious behavior. Frantz Fanon deconstructs this misconception of the Pied-Noir in *L'an V de la révolution algérienne*: "Un autre mythe à détruire est celui des colons d'Algérie présentés de façon indifférenciée comme opposés à la fin de la domination coloniale" [Another myth to deconstruct is that of the settlers of Algeria presented in an undifferentiated way as being opposed to the end of colonial domination] (1959, 154). For metropolitan Frenchmen arriving in Algeria during the war, the Pied-Noir population appeared as foreign and exotic as the native Algerian population. For instance, David B.'s largely black and white images in *Babel 2* depict soldiers embarking on Algerian soil for the first time. The artist uses a splash of pink in his representation of Pied-Noir women waiting on the dock: the bow in one woman's hair, another's blouse, their lips, and the flowers they are carrying. The color change and female presence distinguish this panel from the rest of the page. While women are not portrayed in a sexual way—they are simply there to welcome soldiers—the young recruits objectify them and pervert their intentions through chauvinistic dialogue: "Même les moches ê sont belles . . . . . Les gonzesses ê nous ont même pas attendus! Ha les putes!" [Even the ugly ones are beautiful . . . . . The chicks didn't even wait for us! Oh the sluts!] (B. 2006, 62). The women later disappear as the men travel to remote regions of the country. This female presence creates a brief diversion that transitions the soldiers (and the reader) from the boat that brought them to Algeria to the harsh realities of war.

The representation of Pied-Noir women is quite different in *Une éducation algérienne*, reducing them to lascivious and idle characters that resemble the Orientalist vision of the female Oriental described above. Vidal and Bignon include three female Pied-Noir characters: Françoise (Albert's fiancé and the daughter of a wealthy businessman), Catherine Blois (the wife of Albert's commanding officer), and Emmanuelle (Catherine's friend). While Emmanuelle plays a minor role in the narrative, Françoise and Catherine both have sexual encounters with Albert, the comic book's central protagonist and French conscript serving in Algeria. If intercourse between Albert and Françoise is a natural part of their romantic relationship, Albert and Catherine's affair is one of dominance and manipulation. Despite Catherine's beauty, she is much older than Albert and views him as a conquest necessary for self-validation: she must seduce Albert to feel sensual and beautiful. She repeatedly asks him to compare her body to Françoise's and is drawn in several provocative poses as if to show her body to good advantage. When her husband returns home moments after she finishes with her young lover, she caresses and kisses him in front of Albert who quickly understands her game, murmuring "[a]h la pute" [oh the whore] (Vidal and Bignon 1982, 34). Catherine's infidelity and apparent lack of morals are somewhat shocking. But Catherine's and Françoise's ability to indulge in sexual activity in the middle of a war is particularly revealing of their questionable ethics. Although Albert is a willing participant in these sexual encounters, his character is more developed than the female characters, and he is often engaged in self-conflict. When confronted with Catherine's advances he questions whether he should sleep with her because she is his commander's wife. With Françoise, he quotes Rimbaud, Baudelaire, Sartre, Gide, and Camus, changing the tone of their encounters from romantic to philosophical, even fatalistic.

All three women, Catherine, Françoise, and Emmanuelle, are portrayed as carefree and continue to enjoy afternoons on the beach and social gatherings despite bombings and street shootings. In one scene, Albert is riding on the back of Françoise's scooter. As they drive along, they witness a shooting. Albert is horrified that Françoise continues without stopping to help the victim. She does not see the point given that the victim is, in all probability, already dead. Several pages later after intercourse, Albert and Catherine watch while a car

bomb explodes beneath their bedroom window. In the following panels, the victims of the bomb are drawn trapped in their car. OAS supporters block their escape. The juxtaposition between sexual scenes and acts of OAS terrorism suggests a certain vision of Pied-Noir culture that either condones or is complicit in the use of violence to protect a perverse way of life. Female characters contrast with Albert, but they also serve to humanize him while dehumanizing the Pied-Noir community in general.

Female promiscuity is not the only stereotype accentuated and criticized in the album. Vidal and Bignon critique colonial exploitation in the character of Monsieur Denizi, Françoise's father. He is gluttonous, racist, and a particularly despicable individual. He decides to liquidate his inventory without offering severance or protection to the "melons"<sup>12</sup> who helped build his business (Vidal and Bignon 1982, 37). When Albert accuses Denizi of taking advantage of the native population, Françoise ends their relationship stating: "C'est trop facile. Vous les gens de la métropole, vous ne vous êtes jamais souciés de nous. Vous n'avez pas à nous juger jusqu'à présent" [That's too easy. You people from metropolitan France, you've never cared about us. You've no right to judge us now] (Vidal and Bignon 1982, 38). Françoise's comment recalls a passage from Pied-Noir writer José Castano's *Les larmes de la passion* [Tears of Passion] in which a Pied-Noir explains the difference between colonialism (the exploitation of an underdeveloped country) and colonization (the valorization of an underdeveloped country) to her French friend. Albert Memmi makes a similar distinction in his "Portrait du colonisateur" [Portrait of the Colonizer] between "le colonisateur qui se refuse" [the colonizer in denial] or "le colonisateur de bonne volonté" [the goodwill colonizer] and "le colonisateur qui s'accepte" [the colonizer who accepts him/herself] or "le colonialiste" [the colonialist] (1985, 47, 70). Françoise believes her father's business is an example of colonization and not colonialism. She realizes that Albert will neither understand nor respect her cultural heritage and leaves him. At this point in the narrative, Albert no longer believes in French Algeria (and perhaps never did) and permanently distances himself from his Pied-Noir companions and military duties.

Merezette and Duménil's portrayal of the Pied-Noir population resembles Vidal and Bignon's in its focus on corruption and sexuality. Nadine, the major Pied-Noir female character, uses her sexual appeal to manipulate three male characters: Ahmed (a pro-independence Arab), Kerbronec (an apolitical "tourist"), and Marcel (a French soldier). Contrary to Catherine, Nadine is a self-confident woman who does not need sex to feel beautiful. She remains cognizant of her beauty that she uses to dominate men. She lures Kerbronec to her apartment with sex and, later, convinces a French officer to desert the army so that he can escort her out of Algeria. While Nadine's behavior is not particularly moral, her sexuality places her in a position of power with respect to other characters. Her behavior recalls Albert's assertion in *Une éducation algérienne*: "À la guerre comme à la guerre" [All's fair in love and war] (Vidal and Bignon 1982, 31). Desperate times call for desperate measures, leaving the reader to question the cartoonists' seemingly misogynistic representation of Nadine.

The representation of other Pied-Noir women in this comic book stands in opposition to Nadine's character development. Despite emphasis placed on Nadine's sexuality, she is never objectified and retains her female agency. Nadine differs greatly from the Pied-Noir prostitutes that Scotti solicits near the end of the comic book. This scene paints an overtly negative image of the Pied-Noir. Pictured are a corrupt colonialist settler and his female playthings (Figure 5.2). The scene takes place in a Moorish hotel with lavish fountains and furnishings. By setting the scene in an Orientalist décor, the cartoonists underscore the moral corruption of the Pied-Noir settler. Here the Orient truly becomes a space for sexual experimentation and perversion. When Ahmed bombs the hotel and kills Scotti and his prostitutes, Merezette and Duménil suggest that the future postcolonial order has no need for such individuals. If the scene visually mimics nineteenth-century Orientalist painting, the Pied-Noir replaces the Oriental Other, becoming France's new colonial Other.



**Figure 5.2** Scotti and his Pied-Noir prostitutes. Source: From Denis Merezette and Duménil, *Algérie française!* (Brussels: Éditions Michel Deligne, 1985), p. 33. © Michel Deligne.

Colonial postcards and exhibits place Western viewers in a position of power over the colonial Other: viewers are invited to violate the Other's intimacy without offering up their own intimacy in return. Viewers gain access to their cultural Others while protecting their own space: "Picture postcards simultaneously bring us nearer to those depicted and distance us from them" (Prochaska 1990, 407). In addition to Orientalist painting, colonial postcards serve as iconographic source material for comics. Although Ferrandez admits using colonial postcards as iconographic sources like those published in Alloula's anthology, rarely are they reproduced in his albums. One exception is a postcard in which Abd-el-Kader, a nineteenth-century Arab leader who led an armed resistance during the French conquest of Algeria, is shown protecting Christians. Due to Abd-el-Kader's early resistance to colonialism in the nineteenth century, Algerians venerate him as the first hero of Algerian independence. Forced to surrender in the 1840s, he sought exile in Damascus where he and his guard saved Christians from the Druze, a religious and social community found in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel. For this reason, France later pardoned Abd-el-Kader for his armed opposition to the French colonial enterprise. Ferrandez's reproduced postcard in *Rue de la Bombe* serves an extra-diegetic function. The characters do not pass around a copy of the postcard, but rather a letter that Abd-el-Kader supposedly sent to the fictional Joseph Constant. By including a postcard depiction of Abd-el-Kader's "conversion" as a French ally, the artist accomplishes two narrative objectives. Firstly, the postcard serves as narrator, illustrating in one panel a past event of monumental importance in Franco-Algerian history.

Secondly, by positioning the fictional Marianne<sup>13</sup> in front of the postcard, Ferrandez suggests that the characters' interpretation of the letter is deeply rooted in French, not Algerian, hegemonic discourse. Marianne's fiancé, Sauveur (Savior, in English), hopes to publish the letter "pour que l'attitude de Abd el Kader serve d'exemple aux musulmans, et qu'ils se détournent du FLN" [so that Abd-el-Kader's attitude serves as an example to Muslims and that they turn away from the FLN] (Ferrandez 2004, 23). The postcard and its positioning within comics reinforce colonial ideology, re-appropriating an Algerian national hero so as to defend the ideals of French Algeria. Marianne and Sauveur wish to show Algerians the error of their ways.

Ferrandez's re-appropriation of this image within his anticolonialist narrative is strategic. Despite their colonialist perspective, Marianne and Sauveur (both Pieds-Noirs) hope to quell FLN violence targeting the Algerian and European populations. While their objective is to promote the nineteenth-century Algerian resistance leader Abd-el-Kader as a universal figure, their plan mirrors general tendencies in colonial and postcolonial literatures. Jean-Robert Henry writes, "les personnalités frontalières de I. Eberhardt et Abdelkader . . . ont sans cesse été reconstruites—et romancées—en fonction des contingences du présent" [the frontier personalities of I. Eberhardt and Abd-el-Kader have been continuously reconstructed—and romanticized—in function of the present's contingencies] (1991, 305). Albert Camus' editor, Edmond Charlot, and Octave (a Pied-Noir military officer) warn Marianne and Sauveur that the publication of Abd-el-Kader's letter, in which he pledges allegiance to the French, will never obtain the desired results. They explain that because Messali Hadj, leader of the MNA, and his followers closely identify with Abd-el-Kader, the FLN will use the letter as proof of the MNA's political alliance with the French, thereby justifying its use of violence against the French and other Algerians. Ferrandez uses the ensuing debate to critique colonialism and the obtuseness of its staunchest supporters, who believe that publishing a letter, translated into French, in a newspaper most Algerians would never read would dissolve Algerian discontent and desire for political autonomy. This scene also cautions against the manipulation of transnational historical figures: "l'homme-frontière médiateur peut

être ressenti comme tel par les deux sociétés, ou seulement par une seule. Ou encore plus souvent, la médiation n'a pas le même sens pour les deux sociétés" [the *frontalier* mediator can be interpreted as such by both societies or only by one. Or as is more often the case, this mediation does not have the same meaning for both societies] (Henry 1991, 304). Even though Marianne and Sauveur's intentions are honorable, Octave and Charlot's admonitions suggest that the Pieds-Noirs have never really understood their Algerian neighbors.

Abd-el-Kader also has a visible presence in Boudjellal's *Le cousin harki*. The eponymous character, struggling with his Harki identity and, more specifically, with his relationship to France, is writing his doctoral dissertation on this historically and culturally significant figure. If Moktar's dissertation remains at the periphery of narrative content, the poster-sized image of Abd-el-Kader hung on his bedroom wall becomes the focal point of several panels and invariably serves as fodder for discussion among comic book characters. As an important *frontalier* personality, Abd-el-Kader successfully navigated the borderlands of Franco-Algerian relations and, today, is viewed as an Algerian national hero (as Mahmoud fervently points out) and as a symbol of religious tolerance. Yet as a *frontalier*, Abd-el-Kader risks rejection by one or both "sides," much like Moktar. As if to emphasize this particular likeness, Abd-el-Kader's portrait dominates the panel in which Mahmoud accuses Moktar of betrayal. Later, the portrait looms over Moktar and Julien as they discuss the latter's conversion to Islam. As they speak, Moktar expresses his frustration with writing: "j'y travaille depuis deux ans et tout ce que j'écris finit systématiquement dans ma corbeille . . . Il me manque quelque chose, je ne sais pas quoi!" [I've been working on this for two years and everything that I write systematically ends up in my trashcan. . . . Something's missing, I don't know what!] (Boudjellal 2012, 60). Described as a leader, revolutionary, and spiritual guide, Abd-el-Kader eludes Moktar until he comes to terms with the past and rediscovers his religious faith on the album's final page. While attending his adoptive father's (General, formally Colonel, Martin's) Muslim funeral, Moktar understands that Muslim and French are not antithetical identities. In re-embracing one, he learns to re-embrace the other: "C'est ainsi que je suis devenu musulman" [that's how I became Muslim] (Boudjellal 2012, 69), he proclaims in the narrative voice-over. With his religious renewal come peace and the ability to engage positively with the memory of General Martin and Abd-el-Kader as liminal figures: "Le général m'a donné bien plus que des biens matériels . . . Grâce à lui j'ai enfin trouvé ce qu'il me manquait pour écrire sur l'émir . . . la foi . . . l'islam!" [The General gave me much more than material possessions . . . Thanks to him I finally found what was missing in order to write about the Emir . . . faith . . . Islam!] (Boudjellal 2012, 72). Islam manifests itself as a religion of social tolerance, one that welcomes those who have been rejected and openly scorned, including homosexuals like Julien and "traitors" like Moktar. Instead of insisting on Abd-el-Kader's liminal status as an Algerian revolutionary and, later, French ally, Boudjellal highlights the Emir's spirituality in a post-9/11 world. For even though the narrative predominately takes place in 1973—six years before the Iranian Revolution—the album addresses readers living in 2012 in an attempt to demystify Islam as part of dominant historical discourses in the West and to provide some perspective on the relationship between the past and present.

In addition to Abd-el-Kader and Isabelle Eberhardt, another more contemporary *frontalier* figure is Albert Camus. Jacques Ferrandez, for example, includes quotes by Camus as epigraphs in *La guerre fantôme*, *Rue de la Bombe*, *Dernière demeure*, and *Terre fatale* and even includes Camus himself as a character in his series. The *Carnets* are not, however, exceptional in their focus on Camus. More so than any other French writer, the French associate Camus with the Algerian War due to his Pied-Noir heritage, his political engagement and later disengagement, and finally the frequency with which Algeria figures in his novels and short stories such as "L'hôte," "La femme adultère" [The Adulterous Woman], *La peste* [The Plague], and *L'étranger* [The Stranger].<sup>14</sup> Boualem Sansal asks in his foreword to Ferrandez's comic book adaptation of "L'hôte": "Lirons-nous un jour Camus autrement qu'à travers le prisme de la guerre d'Algérie?" [Will we ever read Camus differently than through the prism of the Algerian War?] (2009, 3). In *Algérie française!* Denis Merezette and Duménil reference Camus' seminal novel on the absurd, *L'étranger*, in which the protagonist irrationally murders an Arab and, later, is sentenced to death because he did not show emotion at his mother's funeral. Sooner than address the racial discrimination inherent in French colonialism (which, incidentally, does not motivate Meursault's actions in *L'étranger*), Camus explores the absurdity of the human condition. In Merezette and Duménil's comic book, Kerbronec discovers and reads Camus' novel in the apartment where he is being held captive. The situation in which Kerbronec finds himself is absurd. Nadine and Ahmed hold him hostage so that he will drive Ahmed out of Algiers the following day. To prevent Kerbronec from escaping, they confiscate his clothing and lock him in Nadine's bedroom. Initially hoping for a sexual encounter with Nadine, the protagonist is humiliated and forced into participating in the war. Unable to sleep, he reads *L'étranger*. Changing shadows and panel inserts depicting day moving into night suggest the passage of time as Kerbronec reads the novel's incipit and later final passage quoted as narrative voice-overs in the comic book.

The reference to Camus is less significant than the reference to *L'étranger*. In many respects, Kerbronec becomes a second Meursault. While Kerbronec is neither completely indifferent to the world around him nor entirely amoral, his motivations for being in Algeria are suspect. He is a trafficker. Hoping to obtain a better price for his car in Algeria, he risks his life for the opportunity to make money. Indifferent to the fact that Algeria is a country ravaged by war, he spends his time scouting potential buyers, women, and bars. His involvement in Ahmed's escape from Algiers and later Algeria is accidental and does not reflect his political beliefs—indeed he remains largely apathetic to the war and decolonization. If Ahmed speaks volumes about his own political activity and militancy, Kerbronec, like Meursault, only appears concerned with the physical: the heat, the taste of sardines, his thirst, and his sexual desires. However, contrary to Camus' protagonist, indifference is what saves Kerbronec several times throughout the narrative. Because he wears his political apathy as a shield, other characters that are more politically minded like Ahmed and Scotti, the quintessential colonizer, find him likeable and unthreatening. At the narrative's climax, Ahmed's anger for Scotti and the ideology he represents literally explodes when Ahmed bombs Scotti's garage, killing the latter in the process. In contrast, Kerbronec disengages himself from Ahmed and Scotti's political discussion the moment Nadine and the opportunity for sexual gratification arrive, reiterating his political apathy and animalistic nature.

The trio Kerbronec-Ahmed-Nadine mirrors that of Meursault-Raymond-Marie in *L'étranger*. Marie and Nadine resemble each other in their sex appeal and physical hold on Meursault and Kerbronec. Yet while Marie remains hopeful and fails to understand Meursault and the absurdity of the human condition, Nadine is a cynical character who uses her sexual prowess to manipulate men. She is no more loyal to Kerbronec than she is to Ahmed or Marcel, the French officer she persuades to desert so that he can escort the threesome to Tunisia at the album's close. Similarly, Ahmed shares Raymond's violent personality, murdering several people in his escape from Algiers. Akin to Raymond in his "friendship" with Meursault, Ahmed establishes an ambiguous relationship with Kerbronec in which he first takes advantage of him and even hates him, but later demonstrates a certain loyalty to him. For example, he expresses sincere regret when he realizes that Kerbronec may have been injured in the explosion. References to Camus in *Algérie française!* serve to elucidate character development and the absurdity of the human condition not in life but, rather, in times of war. Despite its title, setting, and historical context, *Algérie française!* is not meant to engender reflections on historical representation. Instead this comic book with its frequent references to Camus and his philosophy of the absurd, examines human responses to war when differences in perspectives result in violence and death.

Despite the presence of historically significant *frontalier* personalities who are revered and even romanticized in the French imaginary, representations of the colonial Other most frequently come from ethnographic iconography. In contrast to Ferrandez's use of colonial postcards for narrative suturing, Morvandiau illustratively reproduces several "type" postcards (ethnographic images) in his comic book as independent panels. His approach calls attention to photographic presentation as representation. By recreating postcard images in his own graphic style, Morvandiau implies that colonial postcards embody a subjective (read: colonialist) vision of Algeria and its people. When Ann Miller asked about his redrawing of photographs, Morvandiau replied:

The decision to 'redraw' these photos was determined by two separate but related factors. First, it was an aesthetic choice, a way of integrating these images in a homogenous way into the drawn text that I aimed to create. And then, more symbolically, it was a way for me to appropriate these stories: those about my family and those about the relationship between France and Algeria (History with a capital H)—which was largely unknown to me before I began to work on the book. By its nature, memory itself works according to the principle of reinterpretation. (Miller 2011, 110)

In one postcard panel, Morvandiau's narrative voice-over explains that to the artist's grandfather (Paul), before settling there at the age of seventeen, Algeria was an exotic locale inhabited by exotic people. The image shows a replica of a North African village on display at a colonial exposition in Bordeaux, which is a staged example of African civilization as seen by the French. Morvandiau's preference for colonial simulacrum over a more "natural" image—if such a photographic image exists—suggests that French representations of the colonies tailored to French expectations of exoticism and perpetuated Orientalist discourse. The narrator stipulates that "[v]ue de là-bas [la France], l'Algérie est une planète fondamentalement exotique et propice à tous les fantasmes. Mais Paul n'est pas encore l'aventureux berrichon parti à 17 ans pour l'Afrique du Nord" [viewed from over there (France), Algeria is a fundamentally exotic planet that is suitable for all fantasies. But Paul is not yet the adventurous fellow from Berry who left for North Africa at the age of seventeen] (Morvandiau 2007). This statement suggests that upon Paul's arrival in the Maghreb, perceptions of Algeria's exoticism dissipate, giving way to new realities.

Morvandiau's usage of type postcards testifies to the evolution of the native population from colonized to autonomous. As Morvandiau's narrative accelerates into the mid-twentieth century, documentary and press photographs of Algerian leaders begin to replace earlier ethnographic postcards. Except for a few isolated



examples, visual representations of the native population function as a backdrop for text. On the same page as the type postcard described above is an image reminiscent of Alloula's erotic postcards that served as inspiration for Ferrandez. The text, however, does not engage with the image. Colonial prostitution, clearly referenced in the image, is not discussed until several panels later. The frequent gap between Morvandiau's visual and verbal representation results in a narrative schism: the reader is invited to consult a visual history of Algeria based on available iconography (first colonial sources, then press photography and television) while alternately reading Morvandiau's family history and his version of French history. Near the beginning of the album, the narrator describes a trip to New York. While this tangent appears irrelevant to the overall narrative, his disdain for American free market capitalism foreshadows his disdain for colonialism and its exploitative nature. The reader understands that Morvandiau's reproduction of colonial iconography does not imply a fascination with the Orientalist aesthetic. Instead his reproduction furnishes incomplete views of Algeria and Algerians, emphasizing colonial iconography as an inadequate mode of representation. This notion is further reinforced by Morvandiau's fragmentary illustration of Algerian daily life.

What happens when cartoonists want to represent figures that are generally absent from the iconographic and documentary record? How do cartoonists represent forgotten *frontaliers* like the Harkis? In 1994, Farid Boudjellal and Denis Merezette published their comic book short "Vengeance Harkie" [Harki Vengeance] in *El Building*, a journal that used to prepublish comic books and shorts not destined for publication elsewhere. In their introduction to the short, the cartoonists indicate that although this particular project was conceived in 1983, they returned to it later in 1994 and were rushed through the publication process on account of their selected topic. According to Boudjellal and Merezette, "[l]es auteurs de poquets travaillent toujours dans l'urgence, pas le temps de peaufiner, le conscrit s'impatiente. La rédaction a décidé de la publier, car le sujet traité 'les Harkis' est inédit dans la bande dessinée" [paperback authors always work urgently, no time for polishing, the naïve editor gets impatient. The editor decided to publish (our short) because its subject matter, "the Harkis," has never before appeared in comics] (1994, 76). Year of publication is significant in this case because Boudjellal would publish another comic book, this time a book-length album, on the Harki in 2012.

If several novels and nonfictional works published in recent years explore the double bind that plagues the Harki,<sup>15</sup> Boudjellal is the first cartoonist to broach this subject in comics. Boudjellal is, to my knowledge, the first French cartoonist to publish a book-length album on the Harki. Other cartoonists such as Jacques Ferrandez and Yann and Louis Joos have certainly included Harki characters in their albums. However, the Harkis are often secondary characters who add historical realism and diversity to these narratives. The Harki also appears frequently in Algerian comics published throughout the 1980s. Commissioned by the State-funded publisher, SNED and later ENAL,<sup>16</sup> Algerian cartoonists working during this period were restricted in how the Algerian War could be presented. Limited to circulating the FLN's historical discourse on the revolution, cartoonists were unable to exercise any form of poetic license or historical revisionism. Rather than present the problematic situation confronting the Harkis, perceived as traitors to the Algerian cause, Algerian cartoonists like Benattou Masmoudi paint an unflattering portrait of this historical figure. Masmoudi's *Le village oublié* [The Forgotten Village] demonstrates the malicious nature of a Harki as he beats women and the elderly, refuses to distribute food to villagers, and over zealously obeys the French. Algerian cartoonists publishing with SNED/ENAL in the 1970s diffuse FLN ideology about who can and should be considered children of the revolution.

Boudjellal's two publications in 1994 and 2012 provide an interesting point of comparison. Since he worked in conjunction with Denis Merezette for the short, it should be noted that they contributed equally to the short's publication. In addition, Merezette is from a Pied-Noir family, and Boudjellal is of Algerian and Armenian heritage. Both cartoonists have a personal investment in how the history of the Algerian War is represented in their medium. Starting with Boudjellal and Merezette's earlier depiction of the Harki, readers recognize some similarities between the short's Harki characters and SNED/ENAL depictions. The short narrates a man's quest to avenge his family, murdered by Harki soldiers in Algeria during the war. As a young boy, Driss witnessed this horrific event from the closet where his mother had hidden him. Now an adult living in France, Driss has identified and tracked down the three men responsible for his family's demise.

Despite Driss's blind hatred for the Harkis, his victims represent the complexity of the Harki situation. The first is an impoverished father whose family is living in deplorable conditions that have caused his daughter to fall ill. Since Driss introduces himself as the Harki's (Rachid's) nephew, Rachid openly confesses his humiliation at having been a Harki. Stating that he recently arrived from Algeria, Rachid questions Driss about how the family views him as the Harki cousin. Driss reassures him, stating: "Au début, après l'indépendance, les gens parlaient beaucoup et puis maintenant . . . Si tu rentrais personne ne se souviendrait de toi!!" [In the beginning, after independence, people were talking a lot and now . . . If you went home, no one would remember you!!] (Boudjellal and Merezette 1994, 86). Even though he is unhappy in France,



Rachid admits that he is too scared to return to Algeria. Hoping to ameliorate his family's life and living conditions, Rachid accepts Driss's proposition to burglarize a local Darty electronics store. By placing Rachid in a difficult predicament (to steal or watch his daughter die), Driss unwittingly replicates the moral dilemma facing the Harki. Should they accept a salary to feed their family through alliance with the French or risk starvation and extreme poverty? Rachid follows Driss's orders that include invading an elderly couple's apartment and assaulting the husband. When Driss finally reveals his true identity as the son of the massacred family, Rachid attempts to contextualize the event to no avail. Rachid's enthusiasm for the assault and robbery nevertheless suggests that he is capable of the worst crimes when paired with a dominant male. Readers do not empathize with Rachid whose metamorphosis over a few panels let them visualize Rachid the Harki as an unscrupulous participant in the village massacre.

Contrary to Rachid, the second Harki (Zakoum) whom Driss targets is involved in organized crime as a drug lord. Given his profile, the reader is not surprised to discover that Zakoum is an immoral and unethical individual who does not regret massacring the two women and five children in Driss's family. Driss's third victim later identifies Zakoum as the instigator of the incident. Once Driss reveals his identity to Zakoum, the latter begins to laugh. After an intense struggle between Driss and Zakoum's henchmen, Salima (Driss's wife) appears and shoots Zakoum before he can murder the central protagonist, before he can "finir ce qu'il a commencé il y a 30 ans!" [finish what he started thirty years ago!] (Boudjellal and Merezette 1994, 97). If Zakoum and, to a lesser extent, Rachid embody the FLN's vision of the Harki as a traitor and despicable figure, Driss's final target (Salima's father, Ahmed) offers a stark contrast to the previous two. Ahmed, now Driss's father-in-law, attempts to explain what happened in Guelma thirty years prior: "Je comprends pourquoi tu veux me tuer mais tu sais pas tout . . . Quand on est entré, c'était pas pour tuer . . . Juste pour manger un peu. . . C'est Zakoum qui d'un coup a attrapé la chaîne de ta mère" [I understand why you want to kill me but you don't know everything. . . . When we enlisted, it wasn't to kill. . . . Just to eat a little. It's Zakoum who all of a sudden grabbed your mother's necklace] (Boudjellal and Merezette 1994, 104). Driss's response, however, recalls Hubert's response to Vinz in Mathieu Kassovitz's *La Haine* [Hate]: "La haine attire la haine!" [Hate breeds hate!] (1995). Similar to Vinz who feels an obligation to murder a police officer after the death of his friend, Driss tells Ahmed that regardless of what happened, he must kill him: "Vrai ou pas, ce n'est plus important. Je dois te tuer!" [True or not, it's no longer important. I have to kill you!] (Boudjellal and Merezette 1994, 105) As if to further reiterate Hubert's apothegm that hate breeds hate, Ahmed's son enters the room right as Driss murders his father-in-law. The following panel is devoid of text and provides a close-up of the son's face while he watches the scene in horror; the son thus replaces Driss in the final panels as a witness to atrocity. The short ends with the son taking his revenge on Driss, emphasizing that violence is, in fact, an interminable cycle.

While the imposed length of Boudjellal and Merezette's short limited their exploration of the Harki double bind, their insistence on dishonest Harki characters (with the exception of Ahmed) fails to deconstruct Harki stereotypes. Boudjellal's later publication, *Le cousin harki* provides a more comprehensive representation of the Harki. The narrative centers on a young man's quest to return a gifted copy of the Koran to Colonel Jean-René Martin who fought with his father (a Algerian *tirailleur* [colonial infantryman]) in French Indochina. Predominately set in a French medical center in the early 1970s, *Le cousin harki* introduces the Harki Moktar as a character in the *Petit Polio* series. In addition to narrating Moktar's adventures as he meets and interacts with his fellow patients (including Mahmoud, the main protagonist of *Petit Polio*), Boudjellal's storyline develops Moktar's difficult path from orphaned son to his participation in the Algerian War and beyond. At the health clinic on account of his post-traumatic stress disorder, Moktar often relives scenes witnessed as a Harki during the war. In one instance, the vision of a young Algerian boy who watches as the French execute his father disrupts his sleep and provokes night sweats.

Instead of offering readers a chronological narrative, Boudjellal includes frequent flashbacks (as related or dream sequences) that elucidate Moktar's character development and life decisions. Despite the fact that his father's protector (Colonel Martin) took him under his wing in 1958, Moktar could not escape the horrors of war and the feeling that he no longer belonged anywhere. Viewed as a traitor in Algeria and an outsider in France, Moktar strives to come to terms with his Harki identity throughout Boudjellal's comic book. In one scene, Moktar explains that Colonel Martin helped him to reconcile with the French nation. Before his interlocutors can inquire about the details of his reconciliation, the present gives way to the past. The resulting flashback recounts Moktar's experiences living in a Harki internment camp after his arrival in Marseille in July 1962: "Familles entassées à même le sol sous des tentes, promiscuité, voilà comment notre loyauté était récompensée . . . Depuis notre désarmement j'avais perdu toute illusion concernant la France and son gouvernement de l'époque. J'étais haineux" [Families huddled on the ground in tents, promiscuity, this is how our loyalty was repaid . . . . Since our disarmament, I had lost all illusions with respect to France and its

government at the time. I was full of hatred] (Boudjellal 2012, 62). Several pages later, a French veteran recalls the end of the war and official orders to abandon the Harkis in Algeria. Recognizing that the majority of those abandoned were probably lynched, he recounts the Harki purges that took place immediately after the war:

J'ai vu des horreurs, des corps ébouillantés, des hommes enterrés vivants, des membres découpés en lanières sur lesquels on avait versé du sel, d'anciens combattants forcés d'avalier leurs médailles, enroulés dans le drapeau français et brûlés vifs . . . . Tout ce que cette guerre avait engendré de haines et de veuleries s'était libéré, il fallait en découdre avec les perdants, nous en l'occurrence . . . (Boudjellal 2012, 53)

[I saw horrible things, scalded bodies, men buried alive, body parts cut into strips on which someone had poured salt, veterans forced to swallow their medals, rolled up in the French flag and burned alive . . . All that the hatred and acts of cowardice this war created was unleashed, it was necessary to fight the losers, us in this particular case . . .]

Boudjellal paints a much different picture of Harki life than Masmoudi in *Le Village oublié* in which the Harki and his family use their position to gain considerable wealth and power with respect to the other villagers. In Boudjellal's comic book, Moktar underscores the precariousness of Harki life both during and after the war. Despite Moktar's evident kindness and historical awareness, Mahmoud (as the only other Arab patient at the clinic) has difficulty looking past Moktar's Harki identity. Though they were once friends, Mahmoud breaks all ties with Moktar when he confirms what the others have been saying: "Alors c'est vrai ce qu'on dit de toi . . . T'es un harki, un traître à ta race! Et c'est toi qui veux me faire la morale?! . . . Combien t'en as tué de nos frères, dis?!" [So it's true what they say about you. . . . You're a Harki, a traitor to your race! And you want to lecture me?! Tell me, how many of our brothers did you kill?!] (Boudjellal 2012, 49). After speaking with M. Gaston, a former member of the Jeanson Network, Mahmoud realizes that he misjudged Moktar. For, as M. Gaston states, Moktar did not betray his fellow Algerians because he did not betray his own personal ideals. As a French activist for the FLN, M. Gaston found himself in a similar situation with respect to France. Mahmoud, who once viewed Moktar as a Zakoum (the Harki crime lord in "Vengeance Harkie"), now sees him as an Ahmed (Driss's repentant Harki father-in-law). The evolution of Boudjellal's artistic and social vision of the Harki is evident. No longer the scapegoat for residual anticolonial ire, the Harki tragically surfaces as yet another victim of the Algerian War, scorned by both France and Algeria. Living in the space between, the Harki is doomed to a life of uncertainty, anger, and perpetual fear. As if to emphasize the silence of the space between, Boudjellal includes a double page depicting the Mediterranean that marks the break between Moktar's departure from Algeria and his arrival in France. Devoid of life and movement (there are no birds, clouds, or waves), the Mediterranean imposes itself as a dead rather than a liminal space where subjectivity either drowns or evaporates. It is not until Moktar is able to reconcile with the past that he can transform dead space into a productive third space where the negotiation of culture and the revision of national history can occur.<sup>17</sup>

## NOTES

1. Ferrandez later renamed this album *Djemilah*.

2. Mark McKinney indicates in a later publication that Constant is modeled after Léon Roches who served as Abd-el-Kader's secretary in the late 1930s and as General Bugeaud's interpreter (2013a, 62–63). The French General Bugeaud led the successful military campaign that resulted in the colonization of Algeria. He would become the governor-general of Algeria in 1840.

3. Ferrandez explained during our 2009 interview that although the title, *Carnets d'Orient*, is no longer appropriate for the second cycle of the series, the retention of the original title is necessary for marketing purposes. The titular label allows readers to easily identify new volumes of an existing series.

4. Ali Behdad argues in *Belated Travelers* that "Said's inadequate attention to the complexities of power relations between the orientalist and the Oriental makes him reaffirm in a sense an essentialist epistemology that derives its authority from the dichotomies that it puts forth" (1994, 11).

5. This play on words hinges on the French expression, "présenter mes meilleurs vœux" [to present my best wishes] used during the holidays, and the French word for calves, *veaux*.

6. Chris Hedges, a journalist for the *New York Times*, writes: "Those who are called 'trabendistes' in Algerian slang work in the black markets that have sprung up in every major city, making illegal currency exchanges or selling shoes and clothes smuggled from abroad. The word is a corruption of the Spanish word *trabajo*, which means work" (1991).

7. For a discussion of how the war has been represented in Algerian comics, see my essay "Illustrating Independence: The Algerian War Comic of the 1980s."

8. McKinney does acknowledge that, in the first part of the series, "Ferrandez grappled with orientalist and colonialist aesthetics in productive but sometimes contradictory ways" (2001, 45). I am especially interested here in examples of Ferrandez's productive recycling of Orientalist tropes.

9. For a detailed analysis of Ferrandez's representation of women throughout the entire *Carnets* series, see Carla Calargé's article "Images de femmes: une H/histoire de la France en Algérie à travers les *Carnets d'Orient* de Jacques Ferrandez."

10. *Coopérants* were French citizens who worked, usually as teachers, in the colonies or elsewhere in lieu of doing military service.

11. See McKinney's essay "*Métissage* in Post-Colonial Comics" for a thorough exploration of biracial couples in Boudjellal's work.

12. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, farmers depended on migrant Arab workers to harvest their melon crops in the south of France. As a result, "melon" became an ethnic slur used to designate North Africans.

13. Marianne is France's national emblem; she symbolizes the "Triumph of the Republic" ("Marianne" 2007).

14. Ferrandez published comic book adaptations of "L'hôte" and *L'étranger* in 2009 and 2013, respectively. I analyze Ferrandez's *L'hôte*

elsewhere (see Howell 2013b).

15. See, for example, Dalila Kerchouche's *Mon père, ce harki* [My Father, This *Harki*] and *Leïla: Avoir dix-sept ans dans un camp de barkis* [Leïla: To Be 17-years-old in a *Harki* Camp] as well as Zahia Rahmani's *Moze*.

16. SNED or the *Société nationale d'édition et de diffusion* [National Publishing and Broadcasting Company] was a government-controlled Algerian publishing agency that later became ENAL or the *Entreprise nationale du livre* [National Book Agency].

17. As Lucie Knight-Santos rightly observes, “[r]ather than finishing Moktar’s story in one location with one nationality, Boudjellal chooses to give him the possibility of belonging in more than one place or nation” (2014, 219).

## Chapter 6

# Mapping Colonial Landscapes

Time and distance separate second and subsequent generations from the origins of family memory. New generations with limited or no access to communal sites of memory must construct what Mark McKinney calls a “virtual place of memory” (2001, 42, his emphasis; see also McKinney 2013a, 77). These virtual sites result from the reconstruction and remapping of the original. By reconstructing and remapping these spaces, cartoonists guarantee that they remain accessible even after the original spaces have been lost. Robert J.C. Young’s reading of Deleuze and Guattari has demonstrated that “the operation of colonialism [is] a form of writing geography” (1995, 170). The reconstruction or remapping of lost colonial spaces can thus be interpreted as a neo-colonialist operation. But are they always? One way in which the colonial landscape is (re)mapped in comics is by the recycling of view postcards (cityscapes, landscapes). Because view postcards were an important means of promoting France’s largest colony to tourists and private investors, the French government regularly incorporated these images in travel guides and historic records (DeRoo 2002, 159). This method of advertising in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries heralded France’s overseas accomplishments and civilizing mission. Viewers notice a differentiation between rational French urban planning in modern European quarters such as Bab el Oued and the asymmetric, dilapidated indigenous neighborhoods like the Casbah in Algiers. Art historian Rebecca J. DeRoo analyzes this important juxtaposition in colonial postcards depicting different areas of Algiers. She states that representations of French quarters and administrative buildings highlight their neoclassical architecture, urban symmetry (evident, for example, in the organization of streets), and symbols of colonial control such as mounted police officers. Conversely, views of native sections draw attention to poor lighting, chaos, and poorly maintained infrastructures (DeRoo 2002, 161–62). When viewed in tandem, these postcards tout France’s accomplishments in the colonies, notably with respect to urban planning and renewal, while depreciating those of the Ottoman Empire in their failure to civilize and modernize Algeria. Some cartoonists represent both quarters so as to diversify their representation while others focus entirely on the European neighborhoods that their Pied-Noir families frequented. An example of the latter category is Anne Sibran.

In her preface to *Là-bas*, Sibran includes four postcards of Algiers. Because she was born in France and has never visited Algeria, she uses view postcards to ensure herself and her readers a degree of pictorial verisimilitude. Writing about the creative process, Sibran notes: “J’ai utilisé aussi des cartes postales anciennes. Je les voulais un peu sombres, imprécises, pour me laisser des libertés, des vérités plus importantes que le regard” [I also used old postcards. I wanted them to be a bit dark, vague, to give me freedom and truths that are more revealing than a glance] (2003, 3). Sibran relies on postcards and her father’s stories to stimulate her imagination (McKinney 2011c, 139). These sources of inspiration posit Algiers as an idealized space with respect to Paris, where Sibran and her family now live. The reprinted view postcards depict European quarters and the Algerian coastline. Their failure to show war, racial tensions, and indigenous spaces like the Casbah reinforce her father’s utopian vision of Algeria. These inaccuracies and Sibran’s romanticization of Algeria set the tone for the album. *Là-bas* documents Sibran’s father’s feelings of loss for familiar places, family traditions, and a way of life. The comic book articulates his humiliation and growing sense of abandonment in metropolitan France. Although colonial postcards can romanticize conquered spaces and perpetuate Orientalist discourse, Sibran’s use of colonial postcards primarily provides substance for her Pied-Noir narrative of exile. Her inclusion of early twentieth-century postcards in a narrative of exile is significant. Postcards are typically sent from one space to someone located in another space. The act of receiving a postcard emphasizes the recipient’s absence from the space pictured.

As an exile, Alain Mercadal (Sibran’s fictionalized father) develops a special relationship to space. Before leaving Algeria, he creates a work fantasy. His dream of having a good job and a respectable position in metropolitan French society helps calm his anxieties about his family’s future. Prior to leaving the country, he receives a call from the Paris office: he is asked to deliver the company’s client files in person. Interpreting the

request as an official mission of the utmost importance, Alain entertains notions of job security and career advancement: “Une voix de directeur, ferme et grave. Il t’avait dit: Mercadal, vous pourrez compter sur moi, quoi qu’il arrive” [The voice of a director, firm and deep. He’d told you: Mercadal, you can count on me, no matter what happens] (Sibran and Tronchet 2003, 11). The fantasy allows him to leave Algeria and reunite with his wife and newborn daughter in France without losing hope. When he finally arrives at the Paris branch of *Urbaine-Vie* [Urban-Life] (an insurance company), his confidence falters: the secretary neither recognizes his name nor understands the significance of his mission. While waiting several hours for the director, Mercadal begins imagining reasons for his delay: he pictures a busy and apologetic director who is embarrassed for making Mercadal wait. In reality, the office has forgotten about him, and he must beg for a job. Too embarrassed to explain the truth to his growing daughter, he compartmentalizes space. He soon moves his family away from the hustle and bustle of Paris and from his work fantasy by buying a house in the capital’s outer limits. This new space allows him to recreate his lost Algerian space: here he wears his burnoose, drinks anisette, plants trees to shield his house from his French “enemies,” and retreats deeper and deeper into his memories of Algeria. When Jeanne (Sibran’s fictional double) finally witnesses Alain’s work environment as a young woman, she learns the extent of her father’s delusions: “J’étais venue chercher un tyran, je ramenais un souffre-douleur . . . Qui n’avait pas quitté son placard depuis plus de 20 ans” [I came looking for a tyrant, I came back with a whipping boy . . . Who hadn’t left his closet for more than twenty years] (Sibran and Tronchet 2003, 56).

This shameful discovery coupled with the deaths of Mercadal’s sister and mother, his last physical connections to his Algerian past, acts as a catalyst. Alain begins to withdraw completely from his family and reality. Paris, site of his hostile work environment, becomes threatening and unwelcoming, further underscoring his sense of abandonment by metropolitan France. Sibran’s representation substantiates Pierre Nora’s observation of the Pied-Noir community: “Les Français d’Algérie ne veulent pas être défendus par la métropole, ils veulent en être aimés” [The French of Algeria don’t want to be defended by France, they want to be loved] (1961, 43). Unloved and misunderstood, Alain finds solace in his Algerian fantasy. His recreation of French Algeria does not, however, recycle colonialist motifs. His imagination does not juxtapose European and Algerian quarters like the postcards examined in DeRoo’s research. Instead Alain’s imagination focuses on the familiar, positive spaces of his youth. As the narrative progresses, Alain loses his ability to effectively navigate the Parisian landscape. He can no longer function as a father or as a productive member of society. His degeneration manifests in several ways: he gets lost looking for his sister’s grave, he becomes violent with others, and he starts wandering off in search of the past.

Near the end of the album, Jeanne finds her father immobile gazing wistfully at the Seine where he asks for his daughter’s help in reconstituting Algiers on top of the already present Parisian landscape. She complies and uses language to merge the banks of the Seine with the Algerian coastline: “J’ai d’abord fait pousser des palmiers sur les quais. Puis j’ai fait venir d’autres hommes, avec une autre lenteur, et leurs habits, et leurs mots” [I first grew palm trees on the waterfront. Then I brought in other men unhurried and their clothes, and their words] (Sibran and Tronchet 2003, 60). Soon one body of water, the Seine, gives way to another, the Mediterranean. Tronchet’s visual transformation of the Seine closely follows Sibran’s narrative voice-over. Jeanne has never seen the spaces she recreates and therefore contributes to her father’s unrealistic representation of Algeria. Alain quickly forgets traumatic memories such as the shooting at the open-air market to which Jeanne offers an alternative ending, one in which everyone survives. Despite its painful history, Algiers becomes a safe haven for Alain, an idealized space in comparison to Paris. The fact that Jeanne recreates this space for him suggests that Alain is not interested in visual realism. Unable to physically return to Algeria, Alain is free to romanticize his past in order to make the present more bearable. One large panel constitutes the album’s final page (Figure 6.1). As Jeanne escorts the rejuvenated Alain back home, they turn their backs to a hybrid cityscape where Paris and Algiers meet (McKinney 2011c, 146; 2013a, 186). Tronchet’s final image suggests that although Alain has left Algeria, Algeria has not left Alain. The image underscores the intimate postcolonial relationship between France and Algeria for the Pied-Noir. For this reason, Mark McKinney remains critical of the narrative’s conclusion: “*Là-bas*,” he writes, “constitutes an attempt to heal the psychic wounds and renew the collective memory of the Pieds-Noirs. However, it does so by dissolving a key portion of colonial history, which may limit its effectiveness for bringing together Pied-Noir readers with Franco-Algerian ones” (2011c, 147). I agree. Jeanne’s participation in sustaining this particular vision of French Algeria ensures that future generations of Pieds-Noirs will perpetuate positive images of this time and space as well as continue to transmit a Pied-Noir collective memory. Since French Algeria no longer exists, one could argue that the expression “future generations of Pieds-Noirs” represents a historical impossibility. I maintain, however, that the Pied-Noir community regenerates itself on French soil through the transmission of a shared cultural heritage that is distinct from that of metropolitan French

citizens.

Similar to Anne Sibran's reliance on view postcards for narrative substance, Morvandiau uses view postcards as visual surrogates for colonial spaces. Yet contrary to Sibran, Morvandiau has traveled to Algeria, albeit once when he was thirteen years old. Morvandiau's and Sibran's narratives represent instances of postmemory that articulate indirect memories of French Algeria derived from family histories, photographs, personal correspondence, and postcards. Morvandiau's depiction of colonial Algeria results in the remapping of Algerian space, providing partial views similar to those photographed for picture postcards. While Morvandiau sometimes uses early twentieth-century ethnographic postcards to deconstruct them (see chapter 5), he incorporates view postcards to produce a visually coherent representation of space. When discussing his grandfather's educational background, Morvandiau mentions that Paul studied engineering at the Agricultural Institute in Algiers where he met Ferhat Abbas, president of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA) from 1958 until 1961. Perhaps to provide evidence for the school's existence, better visualize his grandfather's youth, or feed the reader's imagination, Morvandiau reproduces a postcard panel depicting the school. Due to the number of Algerian postcards printed around the turn of the twentieth century, it would be difficult to confirm the accuracy of Morvandiau's rendition. However, a survey of similar postcards on the Internet reveals that several views of the school roughly corresponding to this panel were sold as postcards. While it is not vital that the reader find an exact postcard model for Morvandiau's image, the existence of similar views lends credence to his representation of space. In contrast to Sibran, Morvandiau remains faithful to his postcard models: he inserts neither characters nor text into his illustratively reproduced postcards. The majority of the album's textual component appears as narrative voice-overs positioned below individual panels. As a result, *D'Algérie* takes on the appearance of a photo album or scrapbook (as opposed to a comic book) showcasing the artist's collection of postcards and press photographs rather than family pictures. Morvandiau does not include page numbers and passes randomly between distant spaces (Rennes, New York, Algiers, Angers, Tizi-Ouzou). The album's organization is not linear in time or space, encouraging participation from the reader who must decipher the narrative's direction and the artist's relationship to French Algeria.

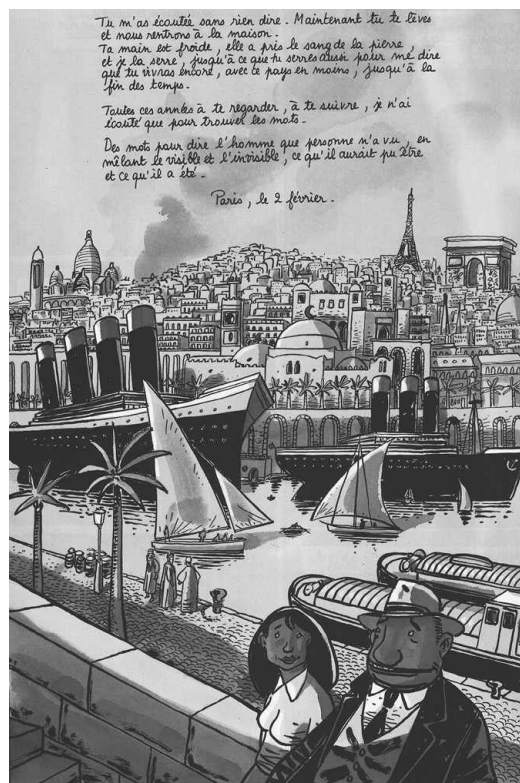


Figure 6.1 The hybridization of cityscapes. Source: From Anne Sibran and Tronchet, *Là-bas* (Paris: Dupuis, 2003), p. 64. © Dupuis.

The album's title, *D'Algérie*, also references spatial categories: Morvandiau's family is from Algeria. Although most of his family now resides in France, the title emphasizes the significance of their Algerian past. If the artist attributes considerable importance to his Pied-Noir heritage, he openly admits that Algeria remains "un étrange pays, assez familier mais surtout inconnu" [a foreign country, quite familiar but, above all, unknown] (Morvandiau 2007, n.p.). The inclusion of view postcards helps Morvandiau conceptualize this



strange yet familiar space. Because he does not include family members in his reproductions, his narrative becomes considerably less personal than Sibran's. Unlike Sibran who uses postcards to stimulate her imagination in the recreation of her father's Algeria, Morvandiau opts for more objectivity. His fragmented drawings and arbitrary panel divisions suggest a certain desire to create a postmemory of Algeria due to a lack of information about his family's homeland. The large white spaces that separate panels and cut through images reflect Morvandiau's own fragmentary knowledge of Algeria "[qui] se limite . . . aux oranges que [s]on père se souvient cueillir, aux feux d'artifices du port d'Alger bombardé pendant la guerre et aux meubles si singuliers du pavillon de [s]es grands-parents près d'Angers" [limited to the oranges that his father remembers picking, to the fireworks over the harbor of Algiers bombarded during the war, and to the unique furniture in his grandparents' house near Angers] (2007, n.p.).

Morvandiau's and Sibran's reworking of view postcards in their albums sparks some concerns. Does their recycling of colonial iconography and Orientalist material create problems or possibilities for comics as a Pied-Noir site of memory? According to Mark McKinney, comics can function as "a *virtual* place of memory, as a substitute for lost or physically inaccessible places of memory" (2001, 42, his emphasis). Morvandiau and Sibran rely on view postcards to recreate French Algeria with visual accuracy because they lack physical access to this space. As indicated in chapters 3 and 4, textual documentation is a common practice in historical comics, one that serves to authenticate their representation of history. Yet the reliance on colonial iconography originally used to promote tourism and financial investment in the colonies implies a tendency for cartoonists to reproduce colonialist ideology. One could argue that Morvandiau and Sibran are less concerned with colonial discourses than with understanding their own family heritage. However, as with Ferrandez, Morvandiau and Sibran establish an ambiguous relationship with colonialism and Orientalism. As Pieds-Noirs, all three cartoonists act as cultural mediators between France and Algeria, as *frontaliers*: "les individus ou les groupes qui habitent la frontière symbolique entre des sociétés placées en situation d'antagonisme ou d'exhibition de leurs différences" [the individuals or groups who live on the symbolic frontier between societies placed in a situation of antagonism or where their differences are exhibited] (Henry 1991, 301).

In contrast to *Carnets d'Orient*, the representation of colonial space is greatly limited in Morvandiau's and Sibran's albums. Whereas Ferrandez provides multiple perspectives and geographical diversity from which these perspectives emerge, Morvandiau and Sibran limit their narratives to their Pied-Noir viewpoint. Nevertheless all three cartoonists rely on family and national histories throughout the creative process because they do not possess their own direct memory of French Algeria or the war. Could Morvandiau, Sibran, Ferrandez, and others have created their albums without colonial iconography? This seems improbable due to the generational gap separating them from French Algeria. Cartoonists lacking a direct memory must rely on family and cultural inheritances in order to constitute a postmemory (their own personal, indirect memory) of this familiar yet unfamiliar past. Mark McKinney writes:

as time passes and as assimilation progresses, the links that younger generations from all [memory] groups . . . have to their parents' homeland become more tenuous and are contingent upon access to the memory of parents and grandparents, and increasingly to historical writing and iconographic archives—especially as those with direct memory of Algeria grow old and die. (2001, 44)

The death of Morvandiau's uncle and the faltering mental health of Sibran's father catalyze narrative. Similarly, Ferrandez mentioned to me during a personal conversation that his decision to create the *Carnets* in the late 1980s was partially triggered by his grandfather's old age. Unable to experience French Algeria (now an ideological space for the Pied-Noir memory community), several cartoonists have reconstituted this space both verbally and visually in order to make sense of their own identity as descendants of Pieds-Noirs.

As the above discussion indicates, the cartoonists presented in *the current volume* engage differently with colonial iconography. Sibran uses view postcards to help her "remember" the sights, sounds, and smells of her father's Algeria. Morvandiau inserts postcard panels directly into his narrative, and their inclusion increases as the album progresses. The history of French Algeria soon usurps family history in *D'Algérie*, suggesting that in order to understand his family Morvandiau must first understand France and Algeria. His view postcards, which mostly depict colonial buildings, churches, and farms, engender feelings of nostalgia and provide a virtual Pied-Noir site of memory from which the colonial Other is largely absent. Despite their divergent objectives and narrative foci, Morvandiau's and Sibran's comic books invite a critical examination of aesthetic records and reinstate the memories of a disappearing community. In contrast, the *Carnets* exploit a more universal approach to French Algeria and the Algerian War. Ferrandez attempts to give voice to several memory communities simultaneously and thus reconstitutes colonial and indigenous spaces. Unlike DeRoo's corpus of colonial postcards that offer unflattering views of Algerian spaces, Ferrandez draws all spaces with equal clarity and respect. European and Algerian characters freely navigate these spaces transforming Algeria into a place of contact and communion, reiterating Ferrandez's main narrative objective and historical vision.

The indigenous urban space par excellence is the Casbah, which figures prominently in comics and film.<sup>1</sup> Visual representations of the Casbah capitalize on its labyrinthine character and poor lighting. For narratives set during the Algerian War, the Casbah parallels Lax and Giroud's depiction of Kabylia: both are dangerous, rebellious, and virtually impenetrable with respect to the French army. While this specific representation dominates French conceptions of this unfamiliar space, some cartoonists offer alternative visions. The first is Jacques Ferrandez who transforms the Casbah into a familiar space. Since several of his main characters live in or are from the Casbah (e.g., Samia, Bouzid, Momo), the reader is offered an insider's perspective—albeit a simulated one due to Ferrandez's own outsider status. Samia's apartment, for instance, is warm and inviting when compared to Nadine's dark, crowded apartment in *Algérie française!*. The latter appears more like a secret hideaway than a living space. The idea of the Casbah as a safe haven or refuge, rather than a terrorist hotbed, comes to the fore near the end of Ferrandez's series when Octave returns to the princesses' cemetery, Constant and Djemilah's final resting place. At this moment in narrative, Ferrandez visually juxtaposes the crowd of Algerians celebrating independence and the crowd of Europeans rushing to leave with whatever they can carry. In the midst of this chaos, Octave revisits the Casbah and the cemetery. Here Octave, the only French character pictured on the entire page, moves toward the Casbah while the Algerian characters are drawn moving away from this space. This directional opposition symbolizes independence: the Algerians run from their highly segregated indigenous space in order to reclaim the totality of Algeria. Similarly, Octave's gravitation toward the Casbah and the cemetery suggests his deep attachment to (French) Algeria and his desire to remain in the country. As an urban green space, the cemetery becomes a terrestrial Eden, one from which he and Samia have been expelled. An Algerian poet and friend, Momo, tells Octave: "c'est l'Algérie nouvelle . . . ni toi [Octave], ni Samia n'en font [*sic*] partie" [it's the new Algeria . . . to which neither you (Octave), nor Samia belong] (Ferrandez 2009a, 59).

Dan and Galandon establish a similar relationship to space in the first *Tahya El-Djazair* volume. Impatient to share his first images of Algiers with Amine (a native *Algérois* [inhabitant of Algiers]), Paul (a *coopérant* in French Algeria) screens a home movie made while exploring the city's European quarters. Even though the reader and Amine see fleeting shots depicting Abd-el-Kader square and veiled Algerian women, the majority of Paul's images are of French administrative buildings, neoclassical architecture, and Europeans enjoying the city from walkways and café terraces. Rather than problematize Paul's representation of "Algerian" space, Amine proposes to show Paul the city he did not see during his outings: "Prends ta caméra! Je vais t'emmener voir Alger l'algérienne, celle que peu de Français connaissent" [Bring your camera! I'm going to take you to see the Algerian Algiers, the one that few French people know] (Dan and Galandon 2009, 14). On the following pages, Amine leads Paul deep into the Casbah where the Frenchman excitedly begins filming. The absence of narrative voice-overs and dialogue in this panel sequence suggests that this space defies description. As Paul takes out his camera, he becomes so overwhelmed that it is nearly impossible for him to keep a steady hand. In many respects, Dan and Galandon create an Algerian space that remains out of reach. The cartoonists paradoxically succeed where Paul ultimately fails: they successfully record the Casbah using colonial iconography, guidebook images, and the French collective imaginary, thereby making it and its hidden curiosities (as Amine calls them) available to their French readers. The post- and/or neocolonial gaze continues where the colonial gaze left off, penetrating normally inaccessible indigenous spaces.

The representation of the Casbah in *Pierrot de Bab el Oued* emphasizes this space as one of dilapidation and decay. Even though Melouah's visualization of the Casbah finds resonance in the colonial view postcards described above, his objective is to critique the postcolonial Algerian government that failed to keep revolutionary-era promises with respect to economic development and political freedom. Instead of representing the Casbah as an irrationally organized space in order to advertise the accomplishments of French urban renewal in other neighborhoods of Algiers, the Algerian cartoonist blames the state of the Casbah in 1988 on the Algerian government's lack of initiative. When Pierrot and his Parisian friend visit the Casbah, the Parisian asks if what they are seeing are actually Roman ruins (Melouah 2003, 25). The walls of the Casbah appear to be falling down around them. Melouah's representation critiques the FLN's failure to renovate the country after independence. In one band of panels, an inhabitant explains to Pierrot and his friend that nothing changes despite regular elections: "Depuis 1962 c'est à l'image de cette affiche" [Since 1962 it's been like this poster] (Melouah 2003, 26). His statement refers to a promotional poster for the FLN on which the candidate's face creates an optical illusion: it appears exactly the same upside down and right side up. The social commentary is evident. Throughout the single-party period, it did not matter which candidate Algerians elected because they all embraced the same political ideologies. Melouah's representation of the Casbah also mirrors Ferrandez's and Dan and Galandon's in his depiction of green space and the Casbah's hidden beauty. For example, the Algerian character whom Pierrot and his friend meet during their visit invites them into his home inside the Casbah. Here Pierrot and his friend are confronted with a different view of this

space. The Casbah's interior is decorated with plants and elements of Moorish architecture such as horseshoe arches and intricately carved columns. Despite the downward spiral of postrevolutionary Algerian politics, the guardianship of Algeria's cultural patrimony is the responsibility of the nation's citizens, of the common (wo)man.

Although some cartoonists include urban, rural, and natural (mountains, beaches, and deserts) settings to show the diversity and vastness of the Algerian landscape, Lax and Giroud restrict their narrative to a mountainous region in Kabylia in order to illustrate the countryside's impenetrability. Giroud sets his story in Kabylia during the winter to distance his representation from popular conceptions of the Algerian landscape as arid and hot. While conducting field research to prepare his comic book, Giroud nevertheless focused on photographing evidence of Algeria's technological backwardness rather than its modernity. The Algeria he sought and found was timeless, confirming that the Orient never changes (Said 1979, 104). Redolent of neo-Orientalist attitudes, Giroud writes:

La plupart du temps la modernité les [les villages kabyles] a défigurés, plantant ici des pylônes électriques, là un cube de béton, ailleurs des bâtiments inachevés, amas grisâtres de parpaings qu'hérissent des ferrailles rouillées. Heureusement, il reste quelques bourgades épargnées. Azrou, par exemple, qu'il faut gagner par chemins défoncés, à travers des forêts de pins et de cyprès, d'eucalyptus et de cèdres de Numidie. Là, passé une lande escarpée semée de cactus et de genêts, un nouveau piton auquel s'accrochent des maisons d'un autre âge. . . . Une pellicule entière y passe. Les photos serviront à camper le village qui apparaît dans les premières pages d'*Azrayen*'. (2008b, 129)

[Most of the time modernity disfigures Kabyle villages, planting electric pylons here, concrete blocks there, elsewhere unfinished buildings, greyish cinderblocks propping up rusted scrap iron (iron bars were used to reinforce the cinderblocks used in home construction; they often stuck out of unfinished walls). Fortunately, a few villages have been spared. Azrou, for example, that is only accessible by paths full of potholes, across forests of pine, cypress, eucalyptus, and Algerian fir trees. There, beyond a steep moor dotted with cacti and brooms (deciduous shrubs), a new peak to which houses from another time cling. I use an entire roll of film on it. The photos will serve as a model for the village that figures in *Azrayen's* initial pages.]

Instead of relying on Lax's creativity to transform modern landscapes into 1950s' colonial Algeria, Giroud uses his camera to validate and document his preconceived notions. Disappointed that modernity has disfigured the Orient, he searches for villages and houses from another time, those that have scarcely changed since the war. During another outing, Giroud discovers a different town whose charm lies in its "rueilles étroites et mal pavées" [narrow and poorly paved alleys] and its "mosquées aux coupôles mangées d'herbes sauvages" [mosques whose domes are overgrown with weeds] (2008b, 131). The few buildings unscathed by decay are those maintained by the French (for example, the vineyard model for the Val Doré). Giroud's findings contrast with the images published by Kabyle photographer Mohand Abouda in his 1985 collection, *Axxam: Maisons kabyles, espaces et fresques murales* [Axxam: Kabyle Houses, Spaces, and Wall Frescoes]. In Abouda's photographs, the viewer gains access to examples of modern Kabyle architecture and interior design.

While Giroud is not himself a liminal figure or *frontalier*, his historical training provided him with the ability to think critically about the representation of colonial and postcolonial spaces. This ability surfaces in his preface and fictional narrative. However, the slight neo-Orientalist tones present in his afterword suggest that despite an ability to criticize and deconstruct problematic concepts such as Orientalism, "Westerners" can never completely free themselves from their cultural heritage and founding mythologies (i.e., that the West is superior to the East or that the East is frozen in time). The love-hate relationship that Westerners have established with their view of cultural Others affects comic book representations of Algeria and reader reception. Several comics studied here like *Azrayen*' and the *Carnets* have been heralded by critics, have received prestigious awards at Angoulême, and are considered commercial successes. This suggests that readers relate to the articulated discourses and value the visual aesthetics of these albums despite their representational biases. Fanch Juteau writes: "On se situe ici dans la sphère du commercial, du loisir. Le lecteur n'achète pas une B.D. pour se retrouver dans la position de l'élève à l'école. Sa culture (étendue ou non) est déjà en partie faite et orientée. Elle guide ses choix" [We're situated here in the commercial and leisure sphere. The reader doesn't buy a comic book to find him/herself in the position of a student at school. His/her knowledge (broad or not) is already and partly made and oriented. It guides his/her choices] (2001, 87). Even though certain cartoonists such as Ferrandez engage quite openly with this "postcolonial paradox," others are not as aware of their cultural biases. For example, Giroud's narrative would be less problematic from a postcolonial standpoint if he were not so explicit in his afterword. Readers need not dismiss this narrative, which remains highly critical of colonial practices. But readers should note the degree to which colonial ideology continues to permeate collective consciousness even in academia—Giroud is after all an aggregated historian. Sandrine Lemaire explains this tendency in secondary and even higher education in the following way: "Il ne s'agit pas là d'élaborer une théorie du complot ou de l'instrumentalisation, mais bien de comprendre qu'il s'agit du produit d'une culture" [It (the pervasiveness of colonial ideology) doesn't come from a conspiracy theory or theories about instrumentalization; it's the byproduct of culture] (2006, 104).

Despite the series' underlying problems, Lax and Giroud use colonial and indigenous spaces to highlight the

narrative's social value and to add complexity to the process of memory formation. Commenting on Lax's visualization of space, Benjamin Stora notes:

La Kabylie devient alors lieu de l'enfouissement où se perdre. Les soldats pénètrent dans les villages et les maisons, espaces à la fois transparents et impénétrables. On regarde ces portes, ces seuils béants et opaques, qui s'ouvrent par la force et se ferment par l'expression sur les visages des paysans algériens. (2008, 6)

[Kabylia becomes a landfill or dump site where one gets lost. The soldiers penetrate villages and homes, spaces that are simultaneously transparent and impenetrable. One looks at these doors, these gaping and opaque thresholds that are opened by force and closed by the facial expressions of Algerian peasants.]

Lax distinguishes between interior and exterior spaces. With the exception of military transportation and one office scene at the beginning of the series, interiors are limited to Kabyle homes and villages, which form a second visible barrier to the French. Soldiers are often drawn beating down doors and forcefully penetrating civilian buildings and infrastructures. The demarcation is physical and cultural, separating Algerians from the French. The only character who moves freely within and between these spaces is Taklhit. Her status as a *frontalier* allows her to permeate different settings and to communicate with both communities. When discussing the concepts of familiar and unfamiliar spaces, Edward Said observes that this distinction is a universal practice that reinforces the Us/Them dialectic. Areas located outside familiar space designate "barbarian land" (Said 1979, 54). The erection of physical barriers maintains a literal and symbolic separation: barriers prevent "them" from invading the familiar as well as acknowledge the difference between "us" and "them."

Throughout *Azrayen*, the French remain outside Kabyle familiar space. This narrative choice is doubly significant. Firstly, because French soldiers must force their way into indigenous spaces, the reader associates their action with penetration and colonization. Kabylia appears as virgin territory whose natural force resists colonial development: melting snow frequently washes out bridges; the rugged terrain renders the task of paving roads difficult; exotic and untamed vegetation obstructs visibility. Lax highlights Kabylia's inaccessibility in his drawings. Notwithstanding this inherent symbolism, the Kabyle region remained an active center of Algerian resistance throughout the colonial period. Patricia Lorcin argues, "[w]hen the decision to make an all-out assault on Kabylia was finally taken, it was not because the Kabyles had waged war on the French, but rather that the presence of a free Kabylia would invigorate the Arab tendency to revolt" (1999, 33). The path of destruction left in the patrol's wake recalls Bugeaud's scorched-earth policy in the nineteenth century. The patrol unscrupulously kills livestock, breaks down doors, burns villages to the ground, and murders innocent civilians. The idea of spatial penetration coupled with the violation of young female villagers finds resonance in Orientalist discourse with its gendered representation of the East.



**Figure 6.2** The Kabyle landscape engulfs the military convoy. Source: From Frank Giroud and Lax, *Azrayen* (Paris: Dupuis Aire Libre, 2008), p. 117. © Dupuis.

The French are rarely drawn in their own familiar space. They navigate natural landscapes in helicopters, armored trucks, and jeeps. The rugged terrain often results in flat tires, mechanical problems, fatal crashes, and other accidents. The search patrol never succeeds in conquering and appropriating space. Instead Kabylia overpowers the French, washing away military vehicles and swallowing the missing patrol (Figure 6.2). Although *Azrayen* narrates a French experience, the reader soon realizes that the French play the role of

outsiders. This notion is further emphasized by the use of Tamazight when Kabyle characters are speaking. Even though Giroud does not use the Tifinagh alphabet, French characters and readers unable to understand his transliterated Tamazight are thrust into an outsider position with respect to the Kabyle population. Because Giroud provides French translations in footnotes, one could argue that he interprets the Orient for his readers, and that he acts as a literal and metaphorical translator. The use of footnotes creates a particular dynamic between *Azrayen'* and the reader who must frequently "leave" the narrative (i.e., by consulting footnotes) in order to understand it. As a result, the French reader becomes a double outsider with respect to the Kabyle characters and the series itself.

Since the advent of the environmentalist movement in the late 1960s, critics have been focusing on the relationship between the human and the non-human in literature and art. While this is certainly not a new trend in world literatures, the recent move toward ecocritical readings of various texts has led to the reconsideration of how cartoonists have chosen to represent this relationship in image and text. It could be argued that comics' multimodal narrative form offers a productive space in which an ecological consciousness can be articulated—perhaps more so than in monomodal narrative forms such as the novel or the visual arts. The dialogue inaugurated between image and text serves to reinforce the various forms of representation and/or to create tension among them. *Azrayen'* provides a prominent example. While one unit of the French army in Northern Kabylia is charged with finding a missing patrol, the soldiers soon realize that their military vehicles and equipment are poorly suited for the rugged mountain terrain on which they are attempting to travel. For reasons related to narrative progression and the creation of narrative suspense, the soldiers and the reader discover that the patrol was accidentally killed while navigating a treacherous stretch of rugged terrain just before the end of the series. However, the entire series prepares the reader for this conclusion. Throughout both volumes, readers are visually confronted with a binary opposition between "civilized" man and nature. Lax's visual dichotomy contrasts sharply with Giroud's textual dichotomy: "civilized" man (the French) versus "uncivilized" man (Algerians).

The contrast separating image and text in *Azrayen'* creates tension between the dominant modes of representation in narrative. While readers are invited to believe that the French continue to exert power over a dominated civilization on the eve of decolonization, as evidenced in Giroud's clearly articulated colonialist dialogues, Lax's illustrations progressively reveal the limits of French imperialism. Their inability to adapt to Algeria's natural environment (and hence to its resulting human environment) prevents the French army from maintaining a foothold in the region. Each time the French attempt to move forward, they are inhibited by the natural world: monkeys bombard them with rocks and other objects, their movement slows as the temperature drops and as wind speed increases, the landscape's jagged contours hinder their movement both on foot and in seemingly terrain-appropriate vehicles, and finally snow and flooding prevent the rescue patrol from continuing their mission just as similar weather patterns caused the demise of the original patrol several weeks prior.

Why do Lax and Giroud use multimodal narrative to juxtapose colonizer and landscape? How does their representation articulate an ecopoetics and/or ecopolitics with respect to the (de)colonization of French Algeria? Can *Azrayen'* be read ecocritically? In an attempt to answer these questions, I now turn to Elizabeth DeLoughrey, George Handley, and René Gosson's reading of Caribbean literature from a postcolonial, ecocritical perspective. They argue that because colonialism led to the implantation of nonnative peoples, plants, and animals in the Caribbean, contemporary Caribbean literature articulates a particular brand of ecocriticism, one in which the disastrous consequences on the native ecosystem have resulted in a unique and arguably symbiotic evolution of postcolonial culture on the various islands. If postcolonialism posits the difference between Self and Other, this Other is almost exclusively human. Postcolonial ecocritics must therefore engage with how the politics of difference have resulted not only in the othering of various cultures, but also in the othering of various natural environments and their constitutive elements (flora and fauna). While many comics studied here highlight combat situations and other moments of colonial contact, the representation of the Algerian landscape in *Azrayen'* forces readers to consider both the environmental and human consequences of colonialism. Lax and Giroud demonstrate that the human and the nonhuman are irrevocably linked. As one revolts against French domination, so must the other.

More important, however, is the implication that the French never successfully colonize Algeria on account of their inability to dominate the natural environment. Various panels from *Azrayen'* recall Werner Herzog's cinematic depiction of Spanish conquistadores searching for El Dorado in the Amazon River basin. Herzog's 1972 film, *Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes* ["Aguirre, the Wrath of God"], emphasizes the inadaptability of the Spanish as they attempt to explore the Amazonian jungle with cumbersome belongings and ill-suited equipment. The visual contrast created between the lush yet dangerous landscape (with its overgrown vegetation, unfamiliar native population, exotic animals, uncontrollable river, etc.) and the ornamental quality



of sixteenth-century Spanish clothing underscores the impertinence of the conquistadores' presence in South America. In their quest for wealth and power, the Spanish bring about their own demise. Only Aguirre, engulfed in a delusional sense of self, survives at the end of the film as monkeys overtake his raft.

Similarly, the French rescue patrol appears unprepared for the Algerian landscape with its steep cliffs, rugged terrain, rivers, and unpredictable climate. The representation of space in *Aguirre* and *Azrayen* in addition to the colonizers' unsuccessful strategies meant to dominate the environment are symptomatic of the inappropriateness of the civilizing mission in general. If the French perceive other populations as uncivilized (thus creating the illusion that the French are themselves civilized), then they fail to identify the various strategies used by native populations to live in equilibrium with their environment. This is not to say that non-Western cultures exist in perfect harmony with nature—a central tenant of primitivism. The imperialist impulse, which is sometimes embedded in or questioned by cartoonists, has created the desire to dominate both the human and the nonhuman regardless of the impossibility of this double domination. For civilizations situated in temperate climates that yield abundant water and food supplies, the reality of droughts, flooding, extreme temperatures, and unforgiving landscapes represents an environmental impossibility. Rather than understand that local populations have adapted to their natural environment in ways that are visibly distinct from French civilization (clothing, food, community, the development of urban and rural spaces, agricultural techniques, the presence or absence of infrastructures), the discourse of colonialism and the politics of difference reinforce the Us/Them dialectic in which different equals inferior, primitive, or backward.

Consequently, the cultural differences arising from environmental differences aliment notions of racial superiority and the idea that our cultural Others are sub-human or animal. The nonacceptance of the numerous evolutionary paths available to human civilizations results in the dehumanization of civilizations in which the chosen trajectory does not reflect that of the colonizer. In other words, the French army uses the human/nonhuman binary to justify the eradication of entire villages: they are nonhuman and therefore expendable, exploitable, "colonize-able." While the dehumanization of the subaltern is an integral component of postcolonial studies, scholars must examine how the refusal to situate and understand various civilizations in their respective environments—an aspect of colonization that is clearly articulated in *Azrayen*—is actually a key component of the colonial process.

For many cartoonists, the most significant and often underemphasized space is located neither in Algeria nor in France but in the space between. Ships crossing the Mediterranean form a transitional landscape whose symbolism varies according to the characters involved.<sup>2</sup> Jean-Robert Henry writes, "[l]e plus souvent . . . les 'espaces frontières' sont des *no man's land*. Le plus valorisé d'entre eux est bien sûr la Méditerranée. Elle est un entre-deux, une zone médiane, un continent 'liquide'" [most often the "border spaces" are no man's lands. The most valued of these is of course the Mediterranean. It's a space between, a middle zone, a "liquid" continent] (1991, 311). Boats and ferries become a metaphor for the Franco-Algerian cultural hybridism observed in *frontaliers*. For Pieds-Noirs, ships mark the first moment of their mass exodus. The boarding of a ship often constitutes the end of a war narrative (*Terre fatale, Une éducation algérienne*) or the beginning of a narrative of exile (*Là-bas, Le cousin harki*). When Jeanne transforms the banks of the Seine into Algiers for Alain in *Là-bas* (see Figure 6.1), she describes a ship about to set sail across the Mediterranean, this time without her father as a passenger. Her focus on the departing ship suggests that this vessel remains a source of anxiety and depression for her Pied-Noir father. In contrast to the other comics studied here, *O.A.S. Aïscha* is the only narrative that takes place entirely on a boat, the Divona. While the ship's crew attempts to transport its cargo of oranges from Algiers to Marseille, they discover two stowaways: Aïscha, a Harki and OAS terrorist, and her captor, a French secret agent. The most significant narrative moment occurs when the ship founders in the Mediterranean with Aïscha trapped inside. For the secret agent, "une seule chose compte . . . que cette fille disparaisse" [only one thing counts . . . that this girl disappears] (Yann and Joos 1990, 14). By sinking Aïscha's body with the Divona, the cartoonists resolve their murder mystery. This conclusion also suggests that particularly problematic *frontalier* characters such as the Harki are displaced individuals who float between Algeria and France without truly belonging to either space. In many respects, the space between can therefore be read as a dead space as the following example demonstrates.

If Kamel Khélif's *Ce pays qui est le vôtre* [This Country That's Yours] is most accurately described as an autobiographical account, relating the cartoonist's wrongful arrest and conviction for theft, it underscores the postcolonial relationship between ex-colonizer and ex-colonized stemming from French Algeria and, later, the Algerian War.<sup>3</sup> While his comic book depicts the central protagonist's (Khélif's) experiences of racial discrimination in Marseille, his narrative passes seamlessly through time and space, between past and present, between Marseille and Algiers. The album demonstrates the difficult continuum of Franco-Algerian history that comes from the phenomenon of colonial fracture identified by Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, and Sandrine Lemaire. Even though the Algerian War is only referred to in the most equivocal of terms, I have



included this comic book because it represents postcolonial angst in postmodern form. This album explores the frontiers of comic book representation within the framework of Algerian War history and memory. The album's deconstructionist tendencies and charcoal images (as opposed to more traditional inked drawings) create reader discomfort in that readers are forced to view Marseille and later Khélif's native Algeria from the protagonist's perspective as he ponders questions related to social justice, the follies of human history, and the complexities inherent in immigrant identity. Rather than see people and places clearly, the protagonist is plagued by his inability to see and remember. Images remain blurred and imprecise. Instead of offering readers picturesque panoramas of cityscapes and landscapes reminiscent of tourist guidebooks or mass media depictions of the urban ghetto, Khélif's visual style emphasizes that these seemingly familiar spaces are actually unfamiliar to both the cartoonist and reader. In Freudian terms, the narrative and physical space of *Ce pays qui est le vôtre* represent the "uncanny."

Khélif's publisher, Frémok (FRMK), favors deconstructionist tendencies in both narrative form and artistic technique in order to counter mainstream modes of representation including those found in more traditional Franco-Belgian comics. Representations such as those found in Khélif's album are less typical than those found in other comics studied here. One could argue that Khélif's album is not a "traditional" comic book in the sense that it disregards generic conventions like text-in-image and speech balloons. Khélif's work nevertheless offers possibilities for how political trauma, social injustice, and postcolonial relationships can be represented in multimodal narratives. Khélif's singular representation of space as nonspace or as spatial *Unheimlich* engages with the (post)colonial landscape in a way that is perhaps problematic for readers but that also remains problematized with respect to the cartoonist. In his refusal to attract readers with postcard images of France and Algeria or common media representations of immigrant neighborhoods in large urban centers, Khélif questions the symbolic value of these spaces in the collective imaginary and proposes new ways of seeing and navigating landscapes. His preference for visual ambiguity (for example, Algiers and Marseille would be indistinguishable without narrative voice-overs) engages readers on a deeper cognitive level as they attempt to recognize spatiotemporal shifts in narrative and consider why/how "familiar" places have become unfamiliar.



**Figure 6.3** The inscription of Franco-Arab names on a liminal landscape. *Source:* From Kamel Khélif, *Ce pays qui est le vôtre* (Montreuil: FRMK, 2003), n.p. © FRMK.

While other comics studied in this chapter recycle Orientalist motifs in their representation of Algeria, *Ce pays qui est le vôtre* rejects this representational strategy. Instead of focusing on specific and traditionally liminal spaces like the Mediterranean and the Sahara, Khélif's deconstruction of space suggests that all space is liminal and that common representations of (post)colonial spaces have rendered them unrecognizable. Before entering the narrative, readers are confronted with the album's seemingly simple title that, in fact, acknowledges the notion of spatial uncertainty. Ann Miller provides detailed analyses of Khélif's title in "Postcolonial Identities" and *Reading Bande Dessinée*. As Miller demonstrates, the demonstrative adjective

“ce,” while often a marker of specificity (*this* one versus *that* one), incurs the opposite function here. To which country does the “ce” refer, France or Algeria? If a predominately French audience might identify with the possessive pronoun “le vôtre” [yours] so that “ce pays” [this country] references France and the “vous” implicit in “le vôtre” becomes “ours” (i.e., our France, not Khélif’s France), readers soon discover that all assumptions regarding the title are challenged. For if a French reader assumes the role of “vous,” the title could also be read from Khélif’s perspective as a cultural outsider: “ce pays qui est le vôtre” therefore becomes Algeria (the referent for “ce pays,” Khélif’s country of origin) with the reader addressing Khélif and others like him as “vous.” As the narrative unfolds, the narrator reveals that he has become an outsider with respect to France and Algeria (Miller 2007a, 269–71; 2007b, 175–77).<sup>4</sup> It is possible that “ce pays” refers to the interstices, the space between. One double page situates readers within a narrative space devoid of definable landmarks and vegetation (Figure 6.3). If people as drawn figures are visually absent, France’s colonial Other is nevertheless present via the superposition of Franco-Arab names onto the darker areas of the pages, suggestive of land or sea. In contrast to desert or bodies of water signaling transitions between two cultures, Khélif’s imagery transforms liminal space into dead space. As if to confirm that Algeria has had more than one war (and not just the “Algerian” war), the superimposed names represent Algeria’s lost generation, those who disappeared or were assassinated by Islamic fundamentalists during the 1990s (Miller 2007a, 271–72; 2007b, 177). The voice-over on the previous page states that the narrator’s aunt must find her son’s body in a mass grave (the dead space on the subsequent double page) if she wants to bury him properly: “Le préposé à l’état civil . . . lui di[t] qu’il lui suffirait de se promener devant l’immense fosse en écoutant son cœur, et quand il se mettrait à battre plus fort, elle aurait trouvé l’endroit où gît le cadavre de son fils” [The official in charge of Public Records told her that all she had to do was walk in front of the immense pit while listening to her heart, and when it started to beat faster, she would have found the place where her son’s body lay] (Khélif 2003, n.p.).

If this liminal space makes itself known as “other” (it is neither desert nor sea, Marseille nor Algiers), its representation within the narrative context of *Ce pays qui est le vôtre* suggests that liminal space or what resembles liminal space is not as productive as Homi K. Bhabha would have us believe. To quote Bhabha: “It is in the emergence of the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (1994, 2, his emphasis). In Khélif’s narrative, liminal space or the point where two distinct cultures converge has a destructive dimension. As the narrator demonstrates, individuals must live in culturally and historically defined spaces, despite the utopian desire to create a niche for themselves in a space where they are considered—and where they consider themselves—outsiders. Ann Miller writes, “[t]his is a story of dislocation, the first uprooting, and subsequent journeys, physical and mental, back to a ‘homeland’ which has itself become a site of enforced displacement and of violent disappearance. France, the protagonist’s country of adoption, has not, though, proved to be a welcoming place” (2007a, 272; 2007b, 177).

While Bhabha and other scholars including Mireille Rosello have examined the performative aspect of cultural encounters,<sup>5</sup> Khélif’s portrayal of dead space and liminality focuses attention elsewhere. In one instance, the narrator walks near a harbor in Marseille. The Mediterranean, described as a “grand miroir noir” [big black mirror] (2003, n.p.), appears impervious. Its brackish waters come to symbolize the muddled relations that bind France and Algeria. Khélif’s visual representation of the harbor and the sea echoes how these spaces are verbalized in narrative as “l’obscurité” [the darkness] (2003, n.p.). Wandering at night under a new moon when no light is reflected off the moon’s surface, the narrator accompanied by the reader moves around shadows and indistinguishable, clandestine forms. The obscurity and dramatic absence of transparency accentuates the narrator’s disorientation and difficulty to navigate Marseille, “[c]ette ville où il s’était tant perdu” [this city where he so often got lost] (Khélif 2003, n.p.), as well as the negation of the city as a productive space of cultural negotiation. Contrary to the evolution of a new cultural hybridism that results from intercultural dialogue, the impossibility of dialogue (as evidenced by the album’s police interrogations and court scenes) produces a cultural proximity that exudes violence and misunderstanding. As the central protagonist continues his walk near the harbor, the double “odor” of beer and foul language overpowers him: “D’autres formes clandestines qui, à coup de gorgées de bière et de paroles fortes, rapprochaient les deux rives de la Méditerranée” [Other covert forms that, with gulps of beer and strong words, brought the two shores of the Mediterranean closer together] (Khélif 2003, n.p.).

In addition to transforming the Mediterranean, the Algerian landscape, and the French metropolis into violent, nonproductive spaces, Khélif suggests through word and image that prison cell walls are the only part of the French landscape that Algerians have been able to alter. Instead of being a point of convergence between two cultures, the prison emerges from cultural conflict or divergence. Indicating that the colonial order has remained intact, this space recreates colonial relationships in the present. This part of the narrative suggests that anonymous Algerians (much like Khélif himself) were wrongfully incarcerated in French prisons

because they were unable to prove their identity—or more specifically, they were unable to convince the court and their accusers that all Arabs do not look alike, that they are unique individuals whose identity is not predicated upon racial categories. Near the beginning of the narrative when the protagonist is initially placed in policy custody (the potentially indefinite detention of a suspect prior to being charged with a crime known in France as *garde-à-vue*), he realizes that his existence depends on the capricious nature of the French penal system. This system privileges the (white) victim over France's cultural Others, who are in fact themselves victims of a flawed and prejudicial legal process. Once this realization occurs, the abstract figures on his prison wall reveal a list of names and dates: "dans l'enchevêtrement des lignes, il déchiffra des signes à l'écriture angulaire, des dates . . . Puis, il clôt son regard après avoir vu et lu la longue liste des noms vomis par le malheur sur ce mur" [in the jumble of lines, he deciphered marks in angular writing, dates . . . Then, he closed his eyes after having seen and read the long list of names spewed onto the wall by misfortune] (Khélif 2003, n.p.).

On the following double page are identity photographs resembling mug shots of unidentifiable men whose faces are blurred yet whose ethnic differences with respect to white Europeans are accentuated (dark skin, dark curly hair, dark eyes, Arab facial profile) (Figure 6.4). Khélif's drawn images are similar in both purpose and representation to images presented in Omar D.'s exhibit, *Devoir de mémoire/A Biography of Disappearance, Algeria 1992*-. Completed in 2007, the Algerian photographer's project reproduced approximately fifty tattered passport photos of Algerians who disappeared without a trace during the turmoil of the 1990s. Even though the faces of those pictured are visible, their names are not. The front cover of *Ce pays qui est le vôtre* includes images of the album's dead spaces on which Algerian faces and names are inscribed: the prison wall with its series of facial images and the mass grave where names indicate the location of bodies. Khélif's comic book suggests that the victims of racial discrimination in France and political discrimination in Algeria remain anonymous: faces are indistinct, only first names are indicated, and names and faces never appear together, reminding the reader that the protagonist's ordeal narrates both the loss of his identity (viewed from the outside, a French perspective) and the strengthening of his subjectivity (identity viewed from his perspective).

Inserted after the prison wall faces are a series of three double pages that underscore the idea of seemingly nonproductive, dead, or negative space. Yet these spaces *are* productive in the sense that they create meaning for the overall narrative. The blackened pages with no discernable patterns other than vertical movement make readers aware that the protagonist and his Arab predecessors do not have a voice within the French penal system. If these six pages shock the reader due to their apparent lack of narrative content, one should note that the absence of representation, reduced here to visual abstraction, is suggestive of the album's central problematic: the silencing of marginalized narratives and the cartoonist's rejection of Orientalizing motifs. The reader's visual perspective converges with the protagonist's as he stares at the walls of his prison cell awaiting interrogation. Similar to the protagonist, the reader remains ignorant of the inner workings of a system that detains suspects based on the "parole sacrée" [sacred word] of victims (Khélif 2003, n.p.). Narrative significance permeates these seemingly blank narrative spaces that can be read as a refusal to speak, as the protagonist's exercising of agency. The complete absence of text and of any discernible image on these pages, offers a contrast to the prison wall faces described above. If Khélif exercises agency via the inclusion of seemingly blank pages, he also exercises agency on behalf of past detainees whose names are inscribed on his prison wall, and whom he then visualizes as faces. Ann Miller argues, "[b]y writing their names on the wall of the cell, these men . . . will reassert themselves as subjects, resisting the erosion of their identity and inscribing the fact of their existence, if not their history" (2007b, 176). The fact that the central protagonist recognizes the significance of such "graffiti" and integrates it into his narrative, demonstrates his desire to retell their stories of wrongful imprisonment rather than their father's stories as builders of the French cityscape. Aedin Ní Loingsigh writes, "the immigrants [who built monuments and public buildings] are refused the right to name [these structures], and are thereby powerless to write their history on the cityscape" (2003, 158).<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 6.4** The reproduction of Algerian identity photographs similar to Omar D.'s photographic project. *Source:* From Kamel Khélif, *Ce pays qui est le vôtre* (Montreuil: FRMK, 2003), n.p. © FRMK.

The quiet omnipresence of transitional landscapes such as those examined here serves more than aesthetic functions. They are no man's lands, devoid of human life yet endowed with considerable symbolic value. Because cartoonists are less directly concerned with these landscapes from a narrative standpoint than with the representation of colonial (living) spaces and colonial Others suggests that cartoonists are attempting to work through their cultural biases and to establish postcolonial contact with French Algeria. Due to its image/text format, comics allow cartoonists to engage with problematic representations of space and people while simultaneously forcing them to recognize the influence colonial iconography has had and continues to have on their perception of the Orient. The ambiguous relationship established between postcolonial cartoonists and colonialist aesthetics results in irreconcilable narrative tensions. Still some *frontalier* cartoonists such as Jacques Ferrandez do not deny the presence of a postcolonial paradox in their work. Instead, *frontalier* cartoonists use comics to acknowledge and explore these tensions in the hopes of opening a direct line of communication between and among Self and Other. In the next chapter, I argue that cartoonists with a deep personal connection to French Algeria and/or the Algerian War, particularly Pied-Noir cartoonists, attempt to work through (or at least come to terms with) this postcolonial paradox through the constitution of a personal comic book postmemory of this historical period. Chapter 7 therefore argues in favor of viewing comics as a medium that allows cartoonists to reconcile national history, French collective memory, and (for some) family memory.

## NOTES

1. See, for example, Julien Duvivier's *Pépé le Moko* and Gillo Pontecorvo's *La Bataille d'Alger* ["The Battle of Algiers"].
2. The majority of Akli Tadjer's novel, *Les A.N.I. du "Tassili"* [The Unidentified Arabs of the Tassili], takes place on a trans-Mediterranean ferry. The ferry's trajectory from France to Algeria and from Algeria to France symbolizes the cultural oscillation of its passengers who include Pieds-Noirs, Algerian immigrants, a Harki, French social workers, and representatives of the Beur generation.
3. See chapter 9 of Ann Miller's *Reading Bande Dessinée: Critical Approaches to French-Language Comic Strip* as well as her 2007 article "Postcolonial Identities" for detailed analyses of Khélif's comic book.
4. The title of Khélif's comic book, *Ce pays qui est le vôtre*, contrasts sharply with the title of Didier Leclair's novel, *Ce pays qui est le mien* (2012), in which the Canadian-Congolese writer explores the immigrant communities of Toronto. Despite their disappointment at being unable to practice their true professions in Canada (i.e., originally a medical doctor, one of the protagonists must now drive taxis to make a living), Leclair's characters approach their migrant status with humor. His title, *Ce pays qui est le mien*, provides an alternative way of seeing one's host country.
5. See Mireille Rosello's *France and the Maghreb: Performative Encounters*.
6. I owe my discovery of Ni Loingsigh's article to Ann Miller. Miller includes this same quotation in her analyses of Khélif's work (Miller 2007a, 270; 2007b, 176).





## Chapter 7

### French Comics as Postmemory

Despite the documentary nature of comics in which the Algerian War is depicted, they remain works of fiction to varying degrees. During my 2009 interview with Philippe Ostermann at Dargaud in Paris, he commented that the fictionalization of historical material partly responds to demands of the comic book market in which straight pedagogical publications rarely fare well in terms of sales. The fictionalization of family and personal histories accomplishes more than financial gain for publishers. Fictionalization also allows cartoonists to constitute a “postmemory” of the war. As Marianne Hirsch explains, postmemory involves a great deal of “imaginative investment” in order to reconstitute memories that are not ours (1997, 22). Cartoonists who most effectively engage with this type of memory have found creative ways to demonstrate the often problematic conflation of fact and fiction, of direct and indirect memory. One example cited in Hirsch’s analysis of Holocaust postmemory is Art Spiegelman’s graphic novel series *Maus*. She posits that Spiegelman’s sporadic use of photography (either as true or drawn representations) is significant because it calls attention to Spiegelman’s fragmented memory of his parents’ past and of an event neither he nor his readers can fully assimilate (Hirsch 1997, 40). The act of drawing photographs instead of reprinting them allows Spiegelman to translate his parents’ and his own memories before transmitting them to readers. As a result, *Maus* translates a memory and history of the Holocaust through several layers of mediation.

Similar to Spiegelman’s *Maus*, several comics studied here create meaning via the inclusion of different types of material evidence such as family photographs, diaries, and personal correspondence in addition to the other material additions examined in previous chapters. This diversity, along with the medium’s specific multimodal narrative form, produces multilayered texts that are well suited to communicate the complexities of the Algerian War. The reproduction or creation of personal sources in comics suggests that cartoonists wish to be seen as active, plausible historical witnesses and not casual bystanders of national history. The inclusion of these sources personalizes their representation of history. This level of personalization means that, due to family or personal experiences, cartoonists have vested interest in their representation. While their vision has the potential to forge or destroy ties to existent memory communities, the creative process helps them understand their family history within the context of the Algerian War. One noteworthy example is Jacques Ferrandez. Although Ferrandez’s personal relationship to French Algeria and the Pied-Noir community stimulated his research, conservative members of this same community have condemned him for pillaging France’s military and colonial iconography and for sullyng France’s civilizing mission in Algeria. For one contributor to *Présent* [Present], a Christian and nationalist French newspaper, Ferrandez is a “salopard” [bastard] and a “renégat” [renegade] with respect to France and the Pied-Noir community (D’Elbe 1987, 4).

The majority of cartoonists studied in this book belong to the “generation after” (Hirsch 2012, 5). Similar to Hirsch’s focus on second-generation Holocaust survivors, Didier Daeninckx (b. 1949), Farid Boudjellal (b. 1953), Jacques Ferrandez (b. 1955), Frank Giroud (b. 1956), David B. (b. 1959), Denis Merezette (b. 1960), Anne Sibran (b. 1963), and Morvandiau (b. 1974) were either very young in 1962 or not yet born. Their interest in the Algerian War comes from contradictions between family and national history and the desire to render hazy childhood memories more distinct. Readers might wonder about the near absence of first-generation cartoonists in this study. War veteran Guy Vidal (1939–2002) and his collaborator, Alain Bignon (1947–2003), are the only ones presented in *the current volume* because of the influence their comic book has had on other cartoonists working on the war today. Additionally, their use of fictionalized sources and polyphonic narrative offers models for later postmemorial narratives. This is not to say that first-generation cartoonists do not exist or that their work has been discounted. However, my study centers on how second and future generations of cartoonists use comic art to make works of postmemory about the Algerian War. Given the difficulty presenting researchers and collectors interested in finding *all* albums published on the war—due to low print runs, limited circulation, lack of media attention, etc.—, it is entirely possible that I have missed major comics predating Vidal and Bignon’s *Une éducation algérienne* in 1982 as well as more recent



publications that could be read as works of postmemory. I invite those interested to continue the challenging task of cataloging and acquiring these albums if, in fact, they exist. The Algerian War as a historical taboo and its negative repercussions on contemporary French society have long relegated this subject to the backburners of artistic creation. The twenty-year time lag between the end of the war and the publication of *Une éducation algérienne* is symptomatic of the need for historical distance. It seems that a respectable passage of time was required before cartoonists felt comfortable broaching this topic in popular culture and elsewhere.

In *Le livre, mémoire de l'Histoire*, Benjamin Stora presents the work of Algerian and French historians in order to demonstrate the evolution of national war historiographies. Although Stora was not the first historian to map this evolution,<sup>1</sup> he has included works of fiction in his research, alongside other sources like dissertations, published critical histories, and colloquia. His methodology suggests that all texts contribute to the constitution of a national imaginary that then dictates the evolution of a national historiography. If critical, testimonial, and even fictional publications started appearing before the war ended, Stora reminds us that the majority of publications came out after the public gained access to France's war archives. According to French law, archives may not be consulted until they have reached thirty years of age. Article L213-2 of the *Code du patrimoine* [Patrimony Code] was recently amended on April 29, 2009, shortening the prescribed waiting period to twenty-five years in certain instances. Researchers may obtain a special dispensation allowing them access to archives before their maturity date (French National Assembly 2009). Due to the archival research involved in the making of various comic book albums and series, a reasonable explanation for the first generation's apparent lack of interest in the war (at least for comic book enthusiasts) is that the war's archives remained largely inaccessible until 1992. In addition, multimodal narratives present particular obstacles to the process of testifying—obstacles that do not always affect the authors of prose testimonies. The image, more so than the written word, recreates lived experience in that it renders avoidance tactics difficult. Studies on the various triggers of intrusive re-experiencing indicate that sensory cues matching those of the original trauma, especially images, regularly provoke episodes of post-traumatic stress in trauma survivors.<sup>2</sup> These research findings coincide with war photographer Marc Garanger's personal observation made during our 2009 interview that veterans cannot speak about their experiences until they are in the presence of period photography, for example at an exhibit. The act of re-seeing lived trauma often stimulates the transition from silence to verbal testimony. For these reasons, comics have made a relatively late, but nonetheless significant, contribution to France's collective war memory.

Consistent with Hirsch's definition of postmemory, the cartoonists presented here engage both critically and imaginatively with the Algerian War. They are critical in their examination of discrepancies between national and family narratives as well as in their study of textual and iconographic source material. They are also imaginative in that they must fill in narrative gaps and, in some cases, attempt to constitute a cohesive narrative out of narrative fragments. The fact that the creative process often results in the constitution of an Algerian War postmemory (as opposed to a direct memory) suggests that the persistent overlap of fact and fiction is a primary characteristic of these comics. While this chapter focuses on the narrative strategies at work in the articulation of a traumatic postmemory, I would like to spend some time exploring the distinct visual manifestation of postmemory in comics. This aspect merits further investigation given the importance Marianne Hirsch has placed on visual representation in works of postmemory in her research.

In terms of artistic style, Hergé's introduction of clear-line drawings (referred to in French as *la ligne claire*)<sup>3</sup> in his *Tintin* series has had a lasting influence on cartoonists. Artists using this style do not rely on hatching or cross-hatching to create tonal or shading effects. Lines are precise while contrasts are deemphasized, giving the overall impression that images are "flat." The reliance on inked drawings allows sketches that appear skeletal to become more detailed. I am not suggesting here that all inked drawings mimic Hergé's signature clear line. However, the process of inking a sketch recreates the visual clarity of Hergé's style. Mark McKinney highlights that this particular style of cartooning "has influenced many generations of cartoonists" (2008b, xiv). Some cartoonists studied here, notably Ferrandez and Boudjellal, alternate between relatively precise inked drawings and more indistinct watercolor images. In chapter 5, for example, I examined Ferrandez's visual representation of the Algerian prostitute Naïma using watercolors. The change in technique allowed Ferrandez to veil our forbidden gaze of the female body so that Naïma could remain unveiled and exposed. Readers divert their attention from Naïma's body to her personal narrative of trauma; Naïma thus defies objectification and reclaims agency. Here Ferrandez engages with postmemorial narrative as a form of reinterpretation or rereading of collective memory, dominant discourses, and ideology.



**Figure 7.1** France abandons Harki soldiers in Algeria at the end of the war. Source: From Farid Boudjellal, *Le cousin harki*, p. 53. © Futuropolis, Paris, 2012.

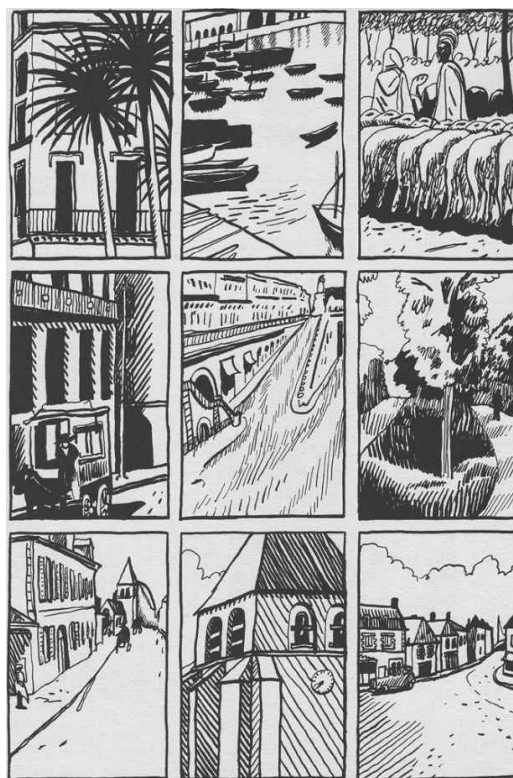
Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas propose another explanation regarding the inclusion of watercolors among more traditional inked panels in Boudjellal's *Petit Polio*. For Douglas and Malti-Douglas, the sporadic insertion of watercolor images mimics the haze of memory in which various aspects are inevitably blurred and impossible to remember. The absence of clear lines recreates the uncertainty of memory: "When we remember past events, especially events from our childhood, the events are not clear and precise like a well-focused photograph. . . . [B]y avoiding photographic realism or the fictitious clarity of conventional cartooning with its sharp clean lines, Boudjellal reminds us that we are seeing memory" (Douglas and Malti-Douglas 2008, 285). Boudjellal effectively reuses this technique in *Le cousin harki*. In one scene, a veteran recounts his last memory of Algeria before being sent home (Figure 7.1). Sandwiched between inked panels of the narrative present are less defined watercolor images depicting the veteran's final view of abandoned Harkis. The framed sequence accomplishes more than just the visualization of memory. This series of watercolor panels with its lack of visual clarity not only reminds readers that they are seeing memory; it also reminds them of the thousands of nameless Harkis massacred in the wake of decolonization, most of whom have remained unidentified. Finally, while the softer tones of watercolor images might inspire feelings of nostalgia in *Petit Polio* (Douglas and Malti-Douglas 2008, 285), these same tones in *Le cousin harki* serve to conceal the harshness of war memories. Readers are most likely aware of the harsh realities of war thanks in part to sensational journalism and the proliferation of graphic images online. The purpose of Boudjellal's narratives and those of other cartoonists studied in my book is not to overwhelm readers with the visualization of political trauma, but rather to explore how trauma affects subjectivity and, more broadly, contemporary art practices.

Although Boudjellal and Ferrandez are the most obvious in their visualization of memory with their reliance on different modes of visual representation, some cartoonists engage with (post)memory and, specifically, its limitations using other techniques. Anne Sibran and Didier Tronchet, for example, experiment with color throughout *Là-bas*. Readers quickly notice the various color schemes dominating any given page. Panel sequences, and quite often entire pages, take on shades of green, sepia, blue, red, and yellow. While I have commented on Tronchet's particular color pallet elsewhere in this book, I would like to reiterate here that his use of color is most effective when different colors coexist in the same panel (see Figure 3.2). The blending of colors and their symbolic value results in the convergence of past and present (when Jeanne recreates the Marché de la Lyre shooting at the end of the album) and the convergence of direct (Alain's) and indirect (Jeanne's) memory of the event. The inclusion of blue and red in this panel indicates the transmission of memory from parent to child as well as the child's ultimate understanding of the significance of parental memory (McKinney 2011c, 145). The lack of photographic realism created by Tronchet's unconventional use of color and cartoony figures reminds readers that Jeanne's reconstitution of Alain's memory via her own personal postmemory is problematic and, similar to her vision of the past, is open to interpretation. Readers should not dismiss *Là-bas* as an ineffective postmemorial narrative. Sibran and Tronchet's dominant mode of representation underscores the problems with cognitive processes and emotional affect related to the act of remembrance.

The visualization of postmemory's incompleteness—particularly when cartoonists refuse imaginative invention in narrative—is central to Morvandiau's comic book. Marianne Hirsch contends, "silence, absence, and emptiness are . . . always present, and often central to the work of postmemory" (2012, 247). Even though *D'Algérie* is not the only black-and-white album included among my primary sources, his preferences for highly schematized or cartoony figures to depict the familiar, for cross-hatching and visual realism to depict

the historical, and for the cutting or cropping of certain images go well with the absence of color. If changes in visual style signal the cartoonist's distance from a particular subject, then his use of visual metonymy and black and white could indicate the incompleteness of memory and historical knowledge. The album's total lack of color also underscores that his representation of family and national history is simply that: representation. Readers become active participants in Morvandiau's narrative through their interpretation of white space, perceptible shifts from familiar to unfamiliar, and less perceptible shifts in space and time. Morvandiau has commented elsewhere that *D'Algérie* represents for him "a sort of participatory comic" (Miller 2011, 118).

Figure 7.2 provides a representative example of how Morvandiau problematizes his postmemory of French Algeria. Composed of nine separate, un-narrated panels of equal size, this page demonstrates how a seemingly coherent collection of images can result in narrative fragmentation. Devoid of narrative voice-overs, the panels invite readers to determine the relationship between the various images as well as their relationship to Morvandiau's overall narrative. On the opposing page, the cartoonist includes a realistic portrait of his paternal great-grandparents with a narrative voice-over that places the couple in Prissac, France where his grandfather Paul was born in 1907. While preceding pages indicate one branch of the family's desire to settle in Algeria where "les mœurs plus souples de la colonie permettent à Antoinette de retrouver un poste" [the relaxed morals of the colony allowed Antoinette (Morvandiau's maternal great-grandmother) to find work] (Morvandiau 2007, n.p.), the fragmented landscape inserted in between pages depicting his maternal and paternal great-grandparents emphasize Morvandiau's failure to fully comprehend their transition from France to Algeria and his family's ignorance of the realities of colonial conquest.<sup>4</sup> Prior to the three pages described above, Morvandiau includes a series of pages in which he explains General Bugeaud's scorched-earth policy used throughout the 1830s to pacify (and destroy) native populations. The fragmented landscape thus becomes ambiguous: How should readers understand the coexistence of indigenous and European settings, two seemingly incongruous places located on shared narrative space? Are we, in fact, seeing colonial French Algeria or is Morvandiau creating a visual montage of Algerian and French space that eventually constitutes a vision of French Algeria? And to what does this vision correspond: to French collective memory, to Pied-Noir communal memory, to Morvandiau's family's memory, or to his own postmemory of colonized space? The visual fragmentation of Morvandiau's narrative is symptomatic of the unreliable and often dangerous processes of memorialization and remembrance.



**Figure 7.2** Morvandiau's fragmented visualization of colonial Algeria (the first five panels) and Prissac in France's Berry region (the last four panels). Source: From Morvandiau, *D'Algérie* (Rennes: Homecooking Books, 2007), n.p. © Morvandiau.

Although personal sources are not always used in comics to constitute a postmemorial narrative, the addition of personal material traces like family photographs, diary excerpts, and letters suggests that cartoonists cannot

escape the war's deeply personal nature based on the collective experience of different communities such as the Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, French soldiers, Sephardic Jews, and Algerian immigrants now living in France. Susan Sontag argues, "the memory of war . . . is mostly local" (2003, 35). Depending on with whom cartoonists identify, personal sources serve to further affiliate them with that community. In the comics studied here, Pieds-Noirs tend to feature family photographs taken in Algeria before the war; French soldiers insert regiment photographs taken during the war; and representatives of the Beur generation use family photographs to highlight their cultural hybridism.

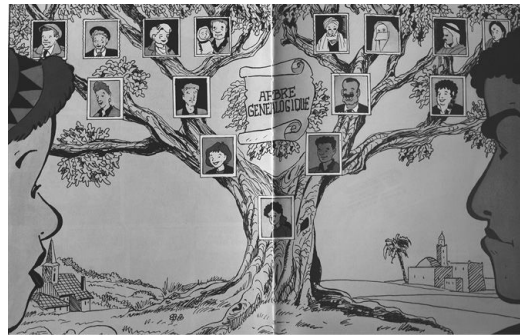
The most common "personal" image reproduced in comics is indisputably the family photograph. Family photography often underscores the loss of tradition and even home for those who experienced the war. The inclusion of photographs taken near the end of the war emphasizes independence as a defining moment in the lives of those involved, while antebellum images can perpetuate feelings of nostalgia. They provide a safe haven from the present or document the end of an era. Grief over the loss of French Algeria as an ideological space in which individual and community identities have been constructed leads these individuals and communities to engage in reparative measures such as colonial nostalgia so as to reconstitute their now disrupted identity. Grief and nostalgia sometimes coincide in war narratives. One example is *Là-bas* in which Anne Sibrán recreates French Algeria as an idealized space despite the war and the exploitative nature of colonization so that her father may salvage his Pied-Noir identity. Writing about Ferrandez's series, McKinney comes to a similar conclusion: "Like other generously minded Pieds-Noirs [like Anne Sibrán?], Ferrandez evokes the ideal of a multicultural, egalitarian colonial society; however, this did not exist because of the basically exploitative nature of colonialism" (2001, 50). In comics whose personal tone characterizes them as narratives of loss, nostalgia—or the idealized feelings associated with a bygone era or space—often vacillates with grief.

Recent debates centered on how to teach colonization and the Algerian War in secondary schools provide evidence for the prolongation of France's grief over decolonization into the present. In 2005, lawmakers recommended that French publishers of high school textbooks recognize the positive role that France played in its overseas colonies. Public outcry led President Chirac to repeal the law nearly one year later. Even in the face of such controversies, education has long remained a pillar of the French Republic and represents an important vector of memory transmission as Jo McCormack has skillfully demonstrated. Dominique Borne, who developed the 1989 history program for students in *terminale* and who co-chaired the committee responsible for the 1998 curriculum, likens school history programs to "[the national photo album] that binds together a community like the family album gives depth to families" (qtd. in McCormack 2006, 136; 2007, 74). Yet as Marianne Hirsch ascertains, family photographs themselves have become objects of public scrutiny at the hands of writers, artists, filmmakers, and cultural critics. Using family photography in their own work, cartoonists and other artists have moved beyond the family's conventional surface and have exposed the hidden stories of antagonistic family relations: "the passions and rivalries, the tensions, anxieties, and problems that have, for the most part, remained on the edges or outside the family album" (Hirsch 1997, 7). In light of this observation, Borne's analogy proves accurate. After all photographic processing is nothing more than the positive development of a negative image after exposure. Only upon close examination of an Ideological State Apparatus's "photo album" can one convert this instrument of ideology into a method of "questioning, resistance, and contestation" (Hirsch 1997, 7).

Farid Boudjellal's inclusion of family photographs in *Jambon-Beur* demonstrates how comic art can effectively convert the photo album into a way of interrogating the past with respect to the present. Boudjellal's use of photo albums helps readers understand the constitution of Charlotte-Badia's (his central protagonist(s)) personal identity in the wake of the war and in the midst of France's postcolonial present. In one instance, the cartoonist narrates Patricia and Mahmoud's (Charlotte-Badia's parents) wedding using captioned "photos" rather than narrated panels. Although Charlotte-Badia is not yet born, her Franco-Algerian identity is clearly articulated in these photographs replete with cultural misunderstandings and superficial politeness. For example, her European relatives appear shocked by an Arab woman's ululations; Patricia's and Mahmoud's parents politely shake hands despite their racial prejudices. As the ensuing narrative demonstrates, their differences stem from the Algerian War. Patricia's father died in combat against Algerians whereas Mahmoud's father sustained injuries during the war, possibly from torture. Including a family photo album early in *Jambon-Beur* forces readers to question the importance of family relationships in the construction of postcolonial subjectivity. Hirsch maintains that "photographs can more easily show us what we wish our family to be, and therefore what, most frequently it is not" (1997, 8). Charlotte-Badia would not have split into two distinct, antithetical personalities if her extended family had not been so divided, despite the artificial family unity projected in Patricia and Mahmoud's wedding album. Boudjellal also uses these images and text to call attention to nascent family conflicts. Once conflicts are resolved (i.e., when Charlotte-



Badia's grandparents succeed in discussing how the war affected them personally), Charlotte and Badia come back together as Charlotte-Badia (McKinney 1997, 183). The girls' reunification symbolizes an acceptance of their cultural hybridism: Charlotte cannot exist independently of Badia and vice versa.



**Figure 7.3** Charlotte-Badia's family tree. Source: From Farid Boudjellal, *Jambon-Beur: Les couples mixtes* (Toulon: MC Productions, 1995), p. 60–61. © Farid Boudjellal.

*Jambon-Beur* closes with a second family photo album intended to remind Charlotte-Badia and children like her of their rich cultural heritage (McKinney 1997, 184; 2013a, 5). Gazing at the family tree, Mahmoud realizes that his and Patricia's ancestors have been in opposition since they first came into contact. Although they are left wondering about the future of their family's newfound happiness, they remain optimistic that both sides have begun to turn this difficult page of their shared histories. Charlotte-Badia, whose photograph forms the central focus of the final double page, symbolizes the fusion of two families, of two cultures, and of two spaces (Figure 7.3). The family tree includes images of Europeans and Arabs and is planted between a mosque located in a desert oasis and a provincial church in a lush valley. While family trees are a common (Western) representation of ancestry, Boudjellal's depiction recalls Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the rhizome as a model for cross-cultural identity. The rhizome contrasts with arboreal roots in that they spread out horizontally without establishing a vertical hierarchy. Boudjellal's family tree does not necessarily establish a vertical hierarchy with respect to Charlotte-Badia's identity, but rather retraces her roots back to historically antagonistic religious and cultural categories. As the last individual pictured on the tree trunk, Charlotte-Badia's roots spread out around her, receiving sustenance from both cultures. As her parents gaze lovingly at a photograph of their only child, the reader realizes that Charlotte-Badia's identity has been (re)constituted more through parental love and acceptance of her individuality than through an awareness of her cultural hybridism. Emphasis on family, and not specifically on mixed families (not all cartoonists studied here come from mixed families), underscores the importance of family history and memory in the resolution of postmemorial narrative.

Patricia Holland observes that the act of taking and safeguarding family pictures "is an act of faith in the future" (1991, 1). Leafing through family photo albums allows us to recognize the past and to imagine continuity with both the present and the future, as demonstrated in the final pages of Boudjellal's narrative. The more time distances us from these images, the more we interpret our past through the lens of history. When trauma enters into the equation, family photo albums testify to the solidity and cohesion of family relations when confronted with trauma. Viewed from this perspective, the importance of family photographs in comics creates personal fantasies about the Algerian War in which a sense of identity and community predominates. Comics often incorporate photography to define a deep familial connection to place (French Algeria) and time (before the war). If loss and mourning figure prominently in French narratives, it is not due to the individuals pictured, but rather to what they represent. Holland stresses that the need to belong to or identify with a community contends with conflicts within the family (1991, 1). Family photographs in comics can therefore symbolize schisms in family relations that were caused by the war and seem too great to overcome.

Among the innumerable crimes committed against humanity during the Algerian War were torture, summary executions, and the razing of entire villages. Even though war criminals were granted general amnesties beginning in 1962, not everyone was able to forgive and forget. For children of combatants, the truth was even more difficult to swallow: how could their parents, who loved and cared for them, commit unspeakable atrocities in times of war? As indicated in chapter 3, Frank Giroud barely recognized his father as portrayed in his war diary. McKinney puts forth that Giroud's afterword expresses "a need to see his father, a former conscript, as an involuntary victimizer, and therefore mostly relieved of personal responsibility for the war's horrible violence" (2013a, 162–64). This level of misrecognition—when children cannot recognize their parents in polarizing contexts—inevitably leads to the child's self-reexamination. To what extent does parental

identity define children?

At the beginning of Manu Larcenet's *Le combat ordinaire*, Marco, the central protagonist, is a celebrated war photographer who can no longer produce graphic images of war. His artistic impotence suggests that he can no longer remain a passive witness to death and destruction. The reader later discovers similarities between Marco (a photographer unable to stop the wars he documents) and his father (an obedient soldier in 1950s' Algeria). When Marco discovers a photograph of his father taken during his military service in Algeria in 1958, he realizes just how little he knows about his father's life (Miller 2007b, 168). His father never spoke to him about Algeria because, according to his father, "il n'y rien à en dire" [there's nothing to talk about] (Larcenet 2008, 18). Marco later finds the same photograph in his neighbor's home. The neighbor, standing next to Marco's father in the picture, turns out to be Lieutenant Gilbert Mesribes who unscrupulously tortured Algerian prisoners during the war (Miller 2007b, 169). Marco's discovery of Mesribes's wartime activities is less significant than Mesribes's association with Marco's father. Did Marco's father participate in strong-armed interrogations?

If Marco expresses his disgust with Mesribes's apparent apathy regarding his crimes, his anger can be interpreted as emotional transference. Due to his inability and perhaps even unwillingness to question his father about the war (his father suffers from Alzheimer's disease and later commits suicide), Marco redirects his anger toward a new object, toward this paternal surrogate. Mesribes's questions consequently strike a personal nerve with the protagonist: "Contre qui êtes-vous en colère? Contre moi parce que je ne suis pas tel que vous le vouliez, ou contre vous pour ne l'avoir pas vu?" [With whom are you angry? With me because I'm not what you expected, or with yourself for not having seen it?] (Larcenet 2008, 51). Is Marco angry with his father because he did not live up to his filial expectations, or is he angry with himself for not having recognized his father as an executioner?

Following his father's suicide, Marco's mother gives him several photographs along with his father's diary. The diary fails to elucidate why his father hung himself and also falls short of answering Marco's questions concerning the role his father played during the war (Miller 2007b, 170). After ending his friendship with Mesribes earlier in the series on account of Mesribes's past, Marco decides to pay him one last visit in *Ce qui est précieux*, the series' third volume. Mesribes is the only person who knows the truth about Marco's father, the soldier. When questioned, Mesribes contextualizes his own war narrative within French national history to justify his use of torture: "il était impensable pour la France de perdre Alger. Massu utilisa alors tous les moyens à sa disposition" [it was unthinkable for France to lose Algiers. Massu therefore used all means available] (Larcenet 2007, 54). He explains that even if Marco's father did not actively participate in their muscled interrogations permitted under Massu, he did so passively through his quiet acceptance and continued obedience to orders. Despite the disclosure of the military's use of torture in the press, many French citizens, including Marco's father, "a préféré se taire . . . par lâcheté, indifférence ou pour éviter une guerre civile en métropole" [preferred to remain silent . . . by cowardice, indifference, or to avoid a civil war in France] (Larcenet 2007, 56). For Mesribes, a soldier's silence signified his complicity. After capturing a prisoner attempting to escape, Marco's father could no longer cope with his moral burden. Recognizing that he had reached a breaking point, Mesribes transferred him to an administrative position in Algiers for the remainder of his military service. The irony is that because Marco's father brought an escaping prisoner back to the military camp knowing fully well that he would be subjected to torture while in custody, he was awarded a medal of honor.

Although Mesribes claims to have disliked Marco's father due to his weak character and lack of military experience, the fact that he has kept a framed photograph of himself with Marco's father is revealing. The photograph not only proves that Mesribes and Marco's father knew each other, it shows Marco's father as a decorated soldier, corroborating Mesribes's narrative. The photograph, now contextualized, explains why Marco's father spoke about neither the war nor his medal often a source of pride for veterans. When Marco first encounters the photograph, he asks his father about the medal. His father replies: "tout le monde a été plus ou moins décoré durant cette guerre . . . les médailles, ça coûte pas bien cher au contribuable et ça donne au soldat la sensation d'être important" [everyone was more or less decorated during this war . . . medals don't cost taxpayers much and they let soldiers feel important] (Larcenet 2008, 18). His medal of honor did not serve this purpose. Instead it became a reminder of his passive participation in the war's atrocities. Unsurprisingly, the medal is not among his father's belongings that Marco inherits after his death. While it remains unclear as to why Mesribes has kept the picture (does it remind him of the one individual he was able to rescue?), it is clear that his criminal past haunts him. When Marco asks Mesribes how he can live with himself, he replies: "Quand on ne meurt pas, il faut bien se résoudre à vivre" [When we don't die, we must resign ourselves to go on living] (Larcenet 2007, 59). As Marco walks away, Mesribes despairingly holds his head in his hands suggesting that he struggles daily with his resolve to continue living. This image contrasts



sharply with the 1958 photograph of two seemingly proud men, demonstrating that the war radically altered Mesribes and Marco's father.

Cartoonist Xavier Mussat uses photography to stress a daughter's shame for her Harki father in his short, "L'étoffe des lâches" [The Stuff Cowards Are Made Of]. Contrary to Larcenet's series, photography does not result in the acceptance of the past or conflict resolution between generations. When the unnamed protagonist meets Salah, a fifty-something Algerian living in France, he learns about his life as a Harki during the war. Though Salah takes pride in his military service (possibly due to the apparent meaninglessness of his present situation), his daughter Léa refuses to speak to him: "Maintenant, elle dit qu'elle veut plus me voir. Je crois qu'elle a honte de son père. Elle veut plus entendre le vieil Algérien qui radote" [Now she says she doesn't want to see me anymore. I think she's ashamed of her father. She doesn't want to listen anymore to the old rambling Algerian] (Mussat 1996, 43). Mussat and Larcenet use family snapshots to accentuate a relational distance between parent and child. Born after the war, Marco and Léa are unable to comprehend their fathers' participation in the war's atrocities. Even so Larcenet's and Mussat's presentation are different: Marco must come to terms with something his father chose not to reveal; Salah must come to terms with his daughter's disapproval of something he did reveal. Since Léa is not an active character in Mussat's narrative, her photograph emblemizes her absence and the impossibility of reconciliation.

Léa's photograph with its implicit symbolism reflects an important aspect of Harki identity. Salah's estranged relationship with his daughter is somewhat typical of the Harki community, in which children initially fail to understand their fathers' choices. Journalist Dalila Kerchouche, for example, admits in *Mon père, ce harki* that she was once ashamed of her father for having betrayed Algeria: "J'ai longtemps cru que mon père était un traître. Harki, pour moi, valait la pire des infamies" [I believed for the longest time that my father was a traitor. For me, Harki equaled the worst possible disgrace] (2003, 24). Photographs of Kerchouche's father and Léa prompt narratives that define the Harki's unfortunate predicament and dispel myths of the Harki as a merciless collaborator. The reader gains sympathy for the Harki, whose family and chosen country (France) have forsaken him. Mussat, for instance, portrays Salah as an individual whose identity and self worth are defined by his unwavering loyalty to the French Republic and whose situation arouses pity in the reader. Despite his past heroism, Salah has become a forgotten veteran who yearns to share his experiences with anyone who will listen, especially since Léa refuses. Salah's photograph of Léa also accentuates her unwillingness to listen to her father.

If photography renders a person's absence more palpable, personal correspondence has the same effect. Contrary to personal photographs, letters give voice to characters not physically present, allowing them to engage with the narrative in ways unavailable to silenced photographed characters. Because Salah has a photograph of his daughter in his wallet rather than a letter, the reader understands that she has ceased all communication with him. The reader can only learn about her indirectly through Salah's words. Salah's conversation with the main protagonist can therefore be read as a missed encounter with his estranged daughter much like Marco's conversation with Mesribes becomes a missed encounter between father and son. Salah explains his past to the protagonist as he might have to Léa. Although the protagonist's compassion does not remedy Salah's situation, it allows the Harki to tell his story.

In addition to Harki purges and displacement, another outcome of the Algerian War was the mass exodus of Pieds-Noirs. Stora estimates that nearly one million Pieds-Noirs fled Algeria between 1962 and 1964 (1999, 72). As French citizens, Pieds-Noirs had few options for settlement. Most "returned" to mainland France, a space few had actually visited prior to the 1960s. Despite shared citizenship, a feeling of foreignness distanced Pieds-Noirs from their French compatriots. Historian Todd Shepard argues that, within certain political circles, the French believed Pieds-Noirs were incapable of integrating French society and even risked upsetting French unity and peace. Once the certainty of a mass exodus was confirmed in 1962, the French press became fixated on welcoming the newly displaced population and on distilling rumors that all Pieds-Noirs were OAS sympathizers. Newsmagazines such as *Paris Match* and *France Observateur* [France Observer] began urging readers to welcome repatriates while emphasizing that France's enemies (the OAS) would be persecuted. In order to quell French fears concerning the appearance and behavior of Pied-Noir families as well as the expected population boom, news venues recycled post-1945 baby boom discourses that underscored the need for more manpower and consumers (Shepard 2006, 160). However, as Shepard explains, "to be male and *Pied-Noir* . . . was enough to be associated with fascist terror" (2006, 161). This perception resulted in the French government's pro-family policy. Pieds-Noirs were welcome in France, but only as heads of family, in order to separate Pieds-Noirs from OAS activists. Fatherhood therefore emerges as a key element in Pied-Noir narratives like *Là-bas* and *D'Algérie*.

While Marianne Hirsch's study of family photography with respect to postmemory provides one justification for the inclusion of personal material such as family photographs in second-generation literatures, Todd

Shepard's analysis indicates that more scholarly reflections on second-generation Pied-Noir literature are needed. Hirsch's conception of postmemory relies on material traces that link individuals to a personalized past so that they can make sense of the present. Yet media representations of the integrity of the Pied-Noir family in the 1960s continue to dictate how Pied-Noir cartoonists imagine their own families today. In comics, where photographs are drawn more frequently than they are reproduced, cartoonists exercise representational agency with respect to the family unit. They may faithfully recreate a family portrait or elaborate certain details and not others. As a result, cartoonists can perpetuate the myth of the family as stable and coherent even when this representation contradicts reality. In *Là-bas*, for example, there is a drawn photograph of Jeanne with her father enjoying a day at the beach in Banyuls. The image depicts a blissful vacation memory shared between father and daughter. The rest of the comic book, however, explores their troubled relationship, stemming from Jeanne's incapacity to understand her father's sense of loss and disorientation in metropolitan France. The photograph, which incidentally appears twice in the album—as an active scene and as a still photograph—haunts Jeanne as she tries to remember what happened to the happy, carefree man pictured beside her. The photograph creates a dominant fiction with respect to the family, one in which Alain Mercadal fulfills the role of husband, father, and provider rather than the emasculated character he has become. By juxtaposing the photographed, idealized father with the reality of his advancing moral and mental decline, Tronchet and Sibran deconstruct political propaganda characterizing the Pied-Noir family as whole and wholesome, as vital members of the French workforce and consumer society. Jeanne's family is in fact fragmented with certain characters such as Alain and his mother, Rose, who still live vicariously in French Algeria. Alain's story, centered on his alienation from French society, provides evidence that France did not welcome its Algerian repatriates with open arms and explains why Alain trusts his utopian vision of French Algeria despite the eruption of violence that he witnessed firsthand in Algiers.

The dominant fiction regarding the Pied-Noir family was intended to separate OAS supporters from “distressed members” of the French family (Algerian repatriates) (Shepard 2006, 160). When women and children emigrated leaving husbands behind, the French government considered the separation to be politically motivated. But in *Là-bas* Alain never sympathizes with the OAS and stays behind in Algiers, hoping that the situation will improve enough for his family to resettle there. Indeed he appears indifferent to politics. In neighboring panels, Alain walks to and from work barely noticing politically oriented graffiti on the walls. He remains, however, optimistic that an accord will be reached permitting all Algerians, native and European, to coexist in Algeria. Neither the government nor French society takes into account the reality of Alain's situation. The fact that he stays in Algeria after his family's departure labels him as OAS; the fact that he is a Pied-Noir defines him as incompatible with French values. As a result, he becomes an easy target for metropolitan ignorance. His Parisian colleagues leave messages on his desk such as “Mercadal = Bourreau” [Mercadal = Executioner] (Sibran and Tronchet 2003, 21).<sup>5</sup> When Alain finds this sign at his workstation, he is confused, as is Jeanne when she hears rumors that she is “la fille du boucher” [the butcher's daughter] (Sibran and Tronchet 2003, 21). Her father becomes a scapegoat for France's colonial past in Algeria and for the negative actions of the OAS, regardless of his relative poverty and blatant lack of political convictions—at least in the comic book adaptation of Sibran's novel.<sup>6</sup>

As narrative progresses, Alain grows increasingly more despondent. Because his colleagues and neighbors do not respect him, he victimizes his family in order to maintain a semblance of masculinity. When he becomes physically abusive, Jeanne and later Alain realize that the rumors and accusations have generated a self-fulfilling prophecy. The death of Alain's sister, and with her one of Alain's last physical connections to Algeria, causes Jeanne to reflect on her father's regression from loving father to aggressive patriarch. While Alain's sister succumbs to cancer before their mother passes, Alain and his sister are deeply bonded in a way that the mother and her children are not. Éliane's death creates a void with respect to her presence in Alain's present-day life and Alain's childhood memories of Algeria. Mark McKinney has indicated elsewhere that the similarity between their first names (Alain/Éliane) “points to the incestuous, erotic relationship between older sister and younger brother: for him she is sister, mother, and romantic love-object. . . . It also suggests an intensely inward-looking culture, first in Algeria and then in France” (2011c, 131). The recycling of the father-daughter portrait in *Là-bas* thus assumes an elegiac character. Rather than remind Jeanne of a happy childhood memory shared with her father, the photograph stimulates Jeanne's grief over her father's decline. While *Là-bas* is a fictional account about Jeanne and Alain Mercadal, the narrative is based on the difficult integration of Sibran's own father into French society after his emigration from Algeria. Sibran's prefatory remarks underline her personal connection with the album's narrative structure. So why does Sibran's preface include scenic postcards of Algiers (see chapter 6) and not a photograph of her father? If Alain's relationship to space is central to the album, so is his Pied-Noir identity. This omission is symptomatic of two related concepts: Roland Barthes' notion of photographic “punctum” and the comic book image as visual filter.

Barthes writes, “le *punctum* d’une photo, c’est ce hasard qui, en elle, *me point* (mais aussi me meurtrit, me poigne)” [the photo’s *punctum*, is that coincidence that *pricks me* (but also hurts me, grips me)] (1980, 49, his emphasis). A photograph’s *punctum* provokes an unexpected emotional response in the viewer who establishes a subjective and personal relationship to the photograph and its referent. Sibran’s refusal to reproduce an actual photograph of her father in *Là-bas* mimics Barthes’ omission of his famed winter garden photograph in *La chambre claire* [“Camera Lucida” (Richard Howard’s translation)]. The assumption is that the original potency of these images would be lost on the reader.

The omission technique is one of several comic book conventions, which allow cartoonists to filter photography’s emotional charge. Firstly, cartoonists can alter images so as to obscure the violence of a particularly graphic image as in the illustrated representations of the Marché de la Lyre drive-by shooting. Secondly, cartoonists can insert fictional or illustratively reproduced photographs such as that of Jeanne and Alain in *Là-bas*. One could further argue that individual panels in which characters are pictured within frames are equivalent to snapshots. Thirdly, actual photographs can be reproduced or omitted from an album. These devices affect both reader and cartoonist. Sibran’s inclusion of fictional photographs and omission of true photographic reproductions suggest that her narrative establishes distance between herself and her readers. Aware that her memories will not have the same impact on her readers, she filters them through the lens of fiction.

Sibran also uses a specific narrative structure in her novel and comic book to create distance. She relies on a fictional persona, Jeanne, and does not include herself in narrative. McKinney writes,

[t]he names Anne (Sibran) and Jeanne (Mercadal) stand out for their suggestive similarities and relationship. Jeanne is the fictional double of Anne—she functions as the ‘I’ (the ‘je’) of Anne in the fiction. The character ‘Je-Anne’ (Jeanne) allows the novelist Anne Sibran together with the cartoonist Tronchet, the freedom to invent, to use the play of fiction (its ‘jeu,’ or game). (2011c, 131–32)<sup>7</sup>

When the cartoon Jeanne relates her father’s story to the reader, the result is a mixture of narrative voice-overs and second-person narrations. In the novel, however, Jeanne takes her story to an unnamed narrator who then transcribes it: “Tu me parlais d’un homme, de ton père Alain, tu me pressais d’écrire sa vie” [You told me about a man, about your father Alain, you urged me to write his life] (Sibran 1999, 11). The novel creates a hierarchy of distance; the narrator uses first-person narration to talk about the creative process, second-person narration with respect to Jeanne, and finally third-person narration with respect to the other characters. Sibran’s decision to exclude an actual photograph of her father in the comic book version serves a different and very important purpose. If still photographs fix their referents in time and space, the visual component of comics animates them. Sibran’s narrative allows Alain and Jeanne to move through the past, into the present, and toward the future. Instead of focusing on who her father was in a photograph taken long ago, Sibran focuses on who her father has become as a result of his experiences as a Pied-Noir forced to live in metropolitan France. In this way, Sibran explores the limits of postmemorial work that, according to Hirsch, is meant to “reactivate and re-embody more distant political and cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression” (2012, 33, her emphasis).

Pied-Noir family photographs also figure in Vidal and Bignon’s *Une éducation algérienne*. In contrast to other comics studied here, the recycling of family photography in this comic book serves to deconstruct the positive government-promoted image of the Pied-Noir family throughout the 1960s. Family photographs can be read as criticisms of the Pied-Noir population. During a visit to his commanding officer’s home (Commander Blois), Albert—the central protagonist, a conscript in Algeria for the first time—discovers a family photo album. As a soldier from metropolitan France, he does not identify with the Pied-Noir community. Still the album as a cultural artifact intrigues him. Catherine, Blois’s wife, explains that it belongs to their friends Emmanuelle and Charles whose families have been in Algeria since 1860. Albert cannot help but notice the absence of Arabs from the album’s photographs: “Il n’y a pas d’Arabes sur ces photos. Ou bien, ce sont des figurants silencieux” [There are no Arabs in these photos. Or, they’re silent extras] (Vidal and Bignon 1982, 28). Given that the Blois family and their friends inhabit a spacious mansion and continue to indulge in pleasures such as swimming, parties, and debauchery despite the bloody war ensuing around them, the photographs do not provoke feelings of nostalgia for a bygone era—at least not for Albert or this commentator. Similar to Albert’s fiancée and her family, the Blois family risks losing its way of life, which depends on the exploitation of Algeria’s native population. Vidal and Bignon’s inclusion of mid-nineteenth-century Pied-Noir photographs produces a double discourse simultaneously recreating and criticizing colonial nostalgia. Instead of using family photographs to recast Pieds-Noirs as distressed repatriates, the cartoonists use them to represent this community as decadent, anti-French colonizers. The photo album contributes to the formation of a fictional Pied-Noir postmemory (presumably Emmanuelle and Charles will bring the album to France to share their family history with subsequent generations) and to the reinforcement of

negative stereotypes of the Pied-Noir in French collective memory.

Quite often resulting from the inclusion or exclusion of family photographs, narrative cohesion and fragmentation have different effects on the reader and serve different functions in memory making. Ferrandez's depiction of the decolonization of French Algeria, to cite just one example, results in a cohesive narrative, one in which the fragmentary nature of how trauma is typically represented is hidden under layers of solid character development, narrative stability, and engaging images. While Ferrandez's technique could be interpreted as a necessary response to the demands of postmemorial narrative, the question of narrative cohesion invites a reconsideration of the expression of traumatic postmemory in multimodal media. For Marianne Hirsch, "postmemory" describes the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before" (2012, 5). She continues, stating that "postmemory's connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation" (Hirsch 2012, 5). Ferrandez's narrative cohesion could certainly be perceived as an example of this "imaginative creation," of filling the gaps left by political trauma. The way in which Ferrandez and others construct narrative nevertheless encourages readers to look at the issue of narrative cohesion and imaginative creation from different angles and to move toward a deeper inquiry into the articulation of a postmemory of the Algerian War in comics.

Similar to other cartoonists presented throughout this book, Ferrandez has a deep personal connection to French Algeria. Born in Algiers on December 12, 1955, Ferrandez and his parents later immigrated to metropolitan France in order to escape the devastating effects of the war on the Pied-Noir community. While not a personal narrative of loss, Ferrandez's series developed from years of archival research and from the realization that his grandfather would soon pass. Unable to directly experience French Algeria, Ferrandez and other cartoonists have opted to reconstitute this space to make sense of their identity as descendants of Pieds-Noirs and to preserve family memories. Even though many comics representing the Algerian War such as Ferrandez's *Carnets d'Orient* offer readers a sense of narrative cohesion and perhaps even closure, a small minority refuses this strategy.

One such example is Morvandiau's 2007 black-and-white album, *D'Algérie*. Morvandiau's fragmented visual representation of personal and transnational history suggests that his understanding of both is incomplete. One could argue that the creative process fails to answer Morvandiau's questions concerning his Pied-Noir identity. His particular representation of the war and its repercussions nevertheless engages with the postmemory of trauma in a way that the *Carnets* and other cohesive narratives studied here do not. Readers are forced to reflect critically on how trauma related to France's colonial past affects the constitution of postcolonial, French subjectivity. In what follows, I propose a reading of Morvandiau's album that carefully considers the fragmentary and multidirectional nature of trauma narratives, the archival impulse of contemporary art practices, and comics as a productive instance of postmemory.

In their seminal work, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub explore the relationship between the acts of witnessing and testifying and those of writing and reading. By alternating between a literary and clinical perspective, Felman and Laub attempt to analyze the articulation of violence and trauma in contemporary, post-Holocaust cultural production. Their readers are invited to consider "how issues of biography and history are neither simply represented nor simply reflected, but are reinscribed, translated, radically rethought and fundamentally worked over by the text" (Felman and Laub 1992, xiv–xv). In other words, readers are encouraged to consider the relationship between text and context. Morvandiau's representation of political trauma engages equally with the textualization of context and the contextualization of text in its focus on the multidirectional character of memory.

What makes Morvandiau's album so interesting as a postmemorial trauma narrative is the way in which it refuses the idea of competitive memory and uses traumatic memories to create a productive, discursive space centered on France and Algeria, on past and present. One of the driving forces behind Morvandiau's narrative is his uncle's assassination in Tizi-Ouzou nearly thirty years after Algerian independence. In one sequence of panels, Morvandiau begins with the image of a telephone introduced by the spatiotemporal indicators: "Rennes, décembre 1994" [Rennes, December 1994] (2007, n.p.). On the following page, Morvandiau depicts himself, the faceless experiencing-I, with his head in his hands as he learns the details surrounding his uncle's death. The narrating-I then relates the experiencing-I's knowledge to the reader. Silke Horstkotte and Nancy Pedri define the narrating-I as a version of the experiencing-I that exists at a different moment in time or level of consciousness (2011, 331).

Visually, this sequence relates Rennes, the cartoonist's current place of residence, to Tizi-Ouzou, his family's former home, via two modes of communication. The first, the telephone, is personal and evokes family memory while the second, newspapers, represents collective memory. Without erasing the original source of trauma (his parents' forced exodus during the Algerian War) Morvandiau places this distant moment in direct

dialogue with a more recent trauma, the Algerian Civil War of the 1990s. In so doing, he effectively demonstrates the overlap of individual and collective forms of memory. Several pages later, Morvandiau returns to Rennes in order to narrate his father's failed suicide attempt. The interconnectedness of these particular traumas throughout Morvandiau's album reflects what literary scholar Michael Rothberg terms "multidirectional memory." Rothberg suggests "we consider memory as *multidirectional*: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative. . . . [The] interaction of different historical memories illustrates the productive, intercultural dynamic that [is] multidirectional memory" (2009, 3, his emphasis). Consequently, Morvandiau's text becomes a productive space, which succeeds in engaging readers despite the narrative's personal undertones and focus on specific historical moments.

Trauma narrative is not only multidirectional in nature; it is also elliptical. According to Mieke Bal, trauma narratives reflect the repressive and dissociative qualities of memory. From a narratological perspective, memory repression functions as narrative ellipsis while memory dissociation functions as *paralepsis*. Bal writes, "repression interrupts the flow of narratives that shape memory; dissociation splits off material that cannot then be reincorporated into the main narrative" (1999, ix). Interpreted within Bal's theoretical framework, Morvandiau's graphic style engenders the failures of narrative memory with respect to trauma. Revisiting the previous example, Morvandiau's anti-chronological and generally nonsensical sequencing of events (a postexile family vacation in Algeria, Uncle Jean's assassination, the narrator's initiation into American culture, and finally his father's suicide attempt) suggests that his narrative is, in fact, following the ebb and flow of the cognitive process of remembrance. Furthermore, the elliptical nature of his narrative manifests as textual silences (the majority of panels are devoid of text) and as images with low levels of iconicity. As an instance of postmemory, the silences and emptiness that dominate *D'Algérie* soon reveal themselves as the narrative's central fulcrum pivoting in various directions at any given moment as a result of memory's multidirectionality.

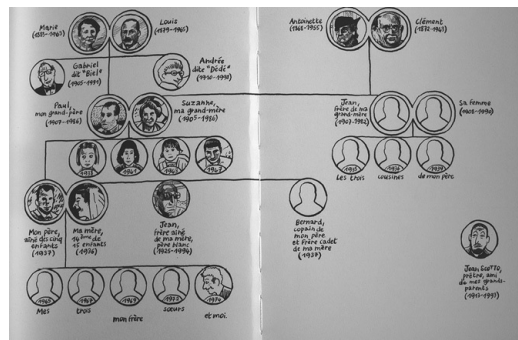


Figure 7.4 Morvandiau's family tree. Source: From Morvandiau, *D'Algérie* (Rennes: Homecooking Books, 2007), n.p. © Morvandiau.

Yet how can cartoonists such as Morvandiau create a semblance of narrative cohesion, arguably a necessary quality required to hook readers, despite the narrative ellipses and *paralepses* that the remembering or retelling of trauma engenders? To answer this question, I now turn to the "archival impulse" at work in contemporary art practices recently identified by art historian Hal Foster. In their attempt to critique the archive, defined in *foucauldian* terms as "the set of hegemonic rules that determine how a culture selects, orders, and preserves the past" (Hirsch 2012, 227), contemporary artists have begun associating decontextualized images and objects taken from a variety of sources including iconic images, press archives, postcards, letters, diaries, and family albums to create private counter-archives (see chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6). The deliberate mixing of public and private sources in *D'Algérie* represents an attempt to answer Morvandiau's central question: "Comment confronter nostalgie, souvenirs, fantasmes de l'enfance aux réalités et à l'histoire de ces trois départements français qui n'existent plus?" [How to confront childhood nostalgia, memories, fantasies with the realities and the history of these three French departments that no longer exist?] (2007, n.p.). While artists such as Ferrandez, Sibran, and Giroud certainly establish a personal connection linking the history of the Algerian War and family history, Morvandiau recycles colonial iconography, newspaper clippings, and personal photographs in order to insert his family's history into French and Algerian metanarratives. His narrative results in the intersection of public and private history, of transnational history and *Pied-Noir* memory.

Morvandiau's family initiates his album but later fades into the background in contrast to other albums such as Sibran's *Là-bas*. Before narrative begins, the reader is confronted with a schematic representation of Morvandiau's family tree from which several photographs are missing (Figure 7.4). Names and birthdates are sometimes supplied without images and in other instances anonymous images are included (pictures without names). His family tree is unbalanced: more information is provided for his father's side than for his mother's.



Although Morvandiau's style lacks Ferrandez's graphic realism and attention to detail, how he represents family members varies from person to person. Gabriel, the artist's great uncle, is highly stylized and what Scott McCloud would probably describe as "cartoony" whereas more immediate family members such as his brothers and sisters are visually absent. With the inclusion of a pictorial history of Morvandiau's family marked by its many lacunae, the reader first assumes that the comic book is personal and retraces the cartoonist's family history in order to arrive at a better understanding of the self.

The first narrative sequence depicting his great-uncle's birthday celebration reinforces this quest for self-understanding. If Gabriel's speech is largely incoherent due to his inebriated state and frequent usage of the local patois, two panels grab the reader's and the cartoonist's attention. Here Morvandiau is presumably recreating a scene in which he was present and that he deems foundational for his narrative. In these panels, Gabriel emphasizes that his father was a Pied-Noir. Contrary to surrounding panels invaded almost entirely by loquacious speech balloons, Gabriel's speech is reduced here to "pied-noir?" and "pied-noir mon père?" [Pied-Noir, my father?] (Morvandiau 2007, n.p.). By focusing on the term "Pied-Noir" with its accompanying question mark, the cartoonist references his own questions regarding his family heritage. The next narrative sequence takes him back to a childhood memory when his family traveled to Algeria on vacation. Although the trip provokes feelings of nostalgia for his parents who were born in Algeria, the memory helps Morvandiau explain to his readers why he decided to undertake this particular project. And as previously indicated, subsequent passages illustrate his uncle's assassination in Tizi-Ouzou by Algerian Islamists and later his father's failed suicide attempt in Rennes. The fact that Gabriel is celebrating his eighty-first birthday in addition to the death of Morvandiau's uncle and his father's near-death experience create an impending sense of loss with respect to family history. When those who directly experienced French Algeria and the war are gone, who will tell their stories? Cartoonists like Morvandiau, Sibran, Giroud, and Ferrandez must therefore rely on family and cultural inheritances in order to constitute a postmemory (read: their own personal, indirect memory) of this familiar yet unfamiliar past.

By reproducing personal photographs, postcards, and news clippings in his own graphic style—as drawn rather than true representations—, Morvandiau engages with source material so as to connect with personal and transnational history. The act of drawing photographs, postcards, and other realia instead of reprinting them allows Morvandiau to radically re-inscribe or rethink memories before transmitting them to readers. As a result, *D'Algérie* translates the memory and history of French Algeria through several layers of mediation. Morvandiau's graphic style becomes the lens through which he views the world around him. This explains why distant relatives are depicted more realistically than more immediate family members. Morvandiau's caricatured portrayal of his great uncle, for instance, allows the cartoonist to communicate his uncle's colorful personality to his readers.

As narrative progresses, Morvandiau's family history and his family become less important than the history of French Algeria retraced from colonization to Algerian independence. While the reasons for this shift in narrative focus are unclear, Morvandiau's fragmented visual representation of personal and transnational history (i.e., panel divisions often cut people or landscapes into fragments rather than allowing them to dominate a single page (see Figure 7.2)) suggests that he only has a partial understanding of both. In contrast to Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and Sibran's *Là-bas*, *D'Algérie* does not document parental testimony. The absence of intergenerational dialogue in Morvandiau's narrative pushes him to privilege other sources of information such as newspapers, postcards, television broadcasts, and critical histories. Morvandiau's archival impulse appears to favor a historical approach. Because *D'Algérie* does not represent a linear narrative (the artist constantly shifts his narrative in time and space), Morvandiau does not attain the same level of closure as other Pied-Noir cartoonists at the end of their narratives. The final panel of *D'Algérie*, rather than looking toward the future, returns to the past when Morvandiau first realized his difference with respect to his French classmates. The narrative ends with a rhetorical question; "T'es quoi quand tu viens d'Algérie?" [What are you when you come from Algeria?] (Morvandiau 2007, n.p.). The artist's decision to favor reality and history over nostalgia, memories, and childhood fantasies does not grant him access to a heightened sense of self as part of French national history. This implies that in order to reach a better understanding of trauma, one must examine the intersection of, and not the discrepancies between, memory and history.

As demonstrated in chapter 6, Morvandiau's depiction of colonial Algeria results in his remapping of Algerian space. He provides partial views similar to those photographed for picture postcards that eventually engender feelings of nostalgia and create a virtual Pied-Noir site of memory. While it could be argued that *D'Algérie* fails as a postmemorial narrative because it oscillates uncertainly between nostalgia and a desire for historical objectivity, the album's extremely fragmented and highly stylized nature can also be interpreted as the cultural remnants required to give postmemory its unique form, without which more cohesive narratives such as Ferrandez's could not exist. *D'Algérie* serves as a model for postmemorial trauma narrative in that it

adequately embodies the characteristics associated with works of mourning and postmemory. While the comic book market appears to favor more cohesive narratives with a colorful and less schematized visual component (*Carnets d'Orient*), Morvandiau's style and mode of representation certainly echo the works of more popular artists, notably Art Spiegelman and David B. In *Babel 2* published in 2006, David B. juxtaposes the simulated objective realism of reproduced press photographs and the visual expressionism he uses to depict French soldiers in 1950s' Algeria. Similar to visual representations in *D'Algérie*, this stylistic choice allows David B. to emphasize his protagonists' fears as well as his own personal sensibilities. Unfortunately, despite their strengths as trauma narratives, these comics are often relegated to the background of France's contemporary comics scene. They have even been overlooked or outright dismissed by the Pied-Noir memory community, whose most extremist representatives are often on the lookout for nostalgic or even mythologized representations of French Algeria. Comics such as *D'Algérie* and *Babel 2* demonstrate that, in spite of public debates on the Algerian War, this wound remains deep in French collective memory. It is a wound that stubbornly resists healing given that sectors of the population continue to experience the war so profoundly in their attempt to comprehend how it has directly or indirectly affected the constitution of their identity several generations later.

Other comics resembling *D'Algérie's* narrative fragmentation such as "L'étoffe des lâches," *Le cousin harki*, and *Là-bas* reinforce works of postmemory as "patchworks" of other memories and histories that do not always result in an artist's understanding of the war and its after-effects. In contrast with Morvandiau's mode of historical representation in which nonlinear chronologies and, at times, indiscernible geographical itineraries dominate storytelling, the publications listed above create a sense of narrative fragmentation with respect to the past despite the apparent continuity and cohesion characterizing the narrative present. To begin, Mussat's 1996 short, "L'étoffe des lâches," simulates this double narrative tendency in which the present appears cohesive while the past remains fragmented via visual metonymy. While shorts might not have the space to develop ideas due to the limited number of pages allotted to each short published per magazine, they merit scholarly attention due to their engagement with collective memory and dominant discourses. Through metonymical representation, Mussat provides a portrayal of the Harki that emphasizes the dichotomy of past and present. The main narrative structure hinges on the chance encounter between Salah, a Harki, and the narrator, whose Pied-Noir grandfather fought in Algeria. If narrative time is restricted here to a few short hours during which the narrator meets Salah in a quaint French town, follows him to a bar, listens to his story, and then wanders off alone into the night, flashbacks take the characters and reader back to the Algerian War and Algeria. Although the flashback panels (four in total) depict a patrol and Algerian landscapes rather than militarized combat, the narrative voice-over (Salah's voice) and other images recall the various topics examined elsewhere in *the current volume*: torture and/or physical trauma (one panel shows a close-up of what appears to be Salah's scarred right hand), the decoration of combatants (Salah is extremely proud of his medal of honor), and general disrespect for the Harkis viewed as disposable (Salah is always sent ahead of French soldiers to verify an area's safety—especially after gunfire is heard). Furthermore, despite being a decorated soldier, Salah now understands (much like Khélif's narrator examined in chapter 6) that he no longer belongs in France or Algeria: "Moi, mon pays maintenant c'est nulle part" [My country is now nowhere] (Mussat 1996, 43.) When Salah learns that the narrator's grandfather (whom he may or may not have known, the narrator is unsure) passed away three years earlier, the two part ways.

The solitude dominating Salah's present (his daughter's absence, the other bar customers' silence as he enters this familiar space, the death of former brothers-in-arms) necessitates his visualization of a bygone era when he was—at least from his perspective—significant. However, as Mussat's reliance on visual metonymy demonstrates, the past has become fragmented. Rather than elucidate certain statements made during their conversation ("Tu vois ces mains? J'ai tué pour la France avec ces mains" [You see these hands? I killed in France's name with these hands] (Mussat 1996, 45)), Salah focuses on a glorious past, valorizing himself as a Harki in the process. While the short's title, "L'étoffe des lâches"—translated here as the "The Stuff Cowards Are Made Of"—could reference Harki cowardice or other negative stereotypes plaguing this community, the title is more revealing about the Harki present than the Harki past. Salah's cowardice stems from his inability to live in the present and to engage with contemporary French society. Rather than seek out and reconcile with his estranged daughter, Salah prefers to escape, to take the next train out of town, destination unknown. Salah's present will continue to move toward the future but will become more and more dependent on a distant past whose traumatic aspects slowly disappear. The result is Salah's increasingly fragmented vision of the war.

For other comics, like Boudjella's *Le cousin harki*, narrative fragmentation occurs in a similar way: Moktar restricts his vision of the past to key moments that are not necessarily presented chronologically. However, the outcome of narrative (and thus of fragmentation) differs significantly from how Mussat resolves his short—or

perhaps “ends” is more appropriate here as the story lacks a veritable resolution. Suffering from post-traumatic stress and the after-effects of toxic gases to which he had been exposed during the war, Moktar finds himself in a health clinic in the south of France. While the narrative present progresses as a cohesive story based on the experiences of Moktar and other characters at the clinic, the reason for Moktar’s narrative present is his fragmented past. He is at the clinic because he fixates on specific fragments without perceiving them within a historical continuum.

Readers first meet the adult Moktar as he is traveling on a bus toward the clinic. After Moktar becomes ill, a fellow passenger mentions his involvement in past wars so as to reassure the central protagonist that he can handle the sight of vomit. This brief exchange provides a first glimpse at Moktar’s past. If the other passenger envies the blissful ignorance of today’s youth, Moktar surprisingly responds: “La guerre? . . . Pour la voir il me suffit de fermer les yeux!” [War? . . . To see it all I have to do is close my eyes!] (Boudjellal 2012, 16). The bus scene visually gives way to a single-panel flashback in which a soldier’s silhouette appears in front of a night sky illuminated by gunfire and explosions. This fleeting representation without proper contextualization intrigues readers who are quickly and frustratingly reintegrated into the album’s narrative present.



**Figure 7.5** Flashback that positions Moktar (depicted in color) in a black-and-white war photograph found in his suitcase. *Source:* From Farid Boudjellal, *Le cousin harki* (Paris: Futuropolis, 2013), p. 23. © Futuropolis.

Later, a comparable narrative shift occurs. Once Moktar is finally left alone to unpack, readers are confronted with four panels followed by a double-page panel. In the smaller panels, we see Moktar as he silently unpacks his suitcase and then contemplates a photograph packed among his belongings. A close-up of this photograph becomes the third panel, providing a point of transition. In the fourth panel, Moktar returns to the past, where a younger Moktar (drawn in color) merges with the black-and-white photograph (Figure 7.5). In sharp contrast to Salah’s fragmented memories, Moktar’s photograph reminds him that he almost did not survive: “Tu peux le remercier, Moktar, s’il avait pas été devant toi, tu y passais aussi! On ne sait plus à qui est le sang de l’un ou de l’autre!” [You can thank him, Moktar, if he hadn’t been in front of you, you would’ve gotten it too! We don’t know anymore whose blood it is, his or yours!] (Boudjellal 2012, 23). The switch from first-person to second-person narration further reinforces the distancing effect created as Moktar views the photograph. As a result, the present Moktar (in the first panel of the sequence) addresses his past self (pictured in the fourth panel). In addition to the appearance of narrative fragments, this sequence causes the splintering of Moktar’s subjectivity into a narrating-I and an experiencing-I. The latter takes over on the subsequent double page, devoid of narrative voice-overs, in which the fourth smaller panel is greatly magnified. Boudjellal uses color to make the younger, past Moktar stand out from the other soldiers pictured as well as to establish a visual parallel between a Moktar covered in blood and his companion, slain in front of him. Without explaining the moment’s significance or historical context, the next page returns to the narrative present and other characters, introducing a new narrative sequence.

As a patient, Moktar suffers from the after-effects of war, from “[l]e genre de saloperie qui te laisse des séquelles à vie!” [the kind of filth that leaves you with after-effects for life] (Boudjellal 2012, 23). Readers consequently expect the inclusion of traumatic flashbacks in narrative as a symptom of Moktar’s psychological illness. In Boudjellal’s first chapter, he provides these moments, albeit sparingly. After the discovery of the photograph, nightmares related to combat situations (explosions, running, the execution of a young boy’s father) plague Moktar’s sleep. These dream sequences provide opportunities to conflate past and present. In one instance, Moktar starts dreaming just as another character begins to hallucinate after smoking marijuana. When Julien calls out for his father, his words (“Papa, Papa!” (Boudjellal 2012, 31)) converge with those of a young boy who begins calling out for his dead father. Here the past resurfaces in the present, haunting Moktar who once again focalizes on specific moments during which time appears to have stopped. What happened to the boy? Where did Moktar and his regiment go afterwards? If later narrative sequences provide glimpses of Harki disarmament, Harki purges, and the sequestration of Harkis in French internment camps, Moktar’s story is less accessible to readers who must retrace his personal trajectory from young boy to clinical inpatient.

Moktar's war narrative becomes increasingly less fragmented as time progresses. Readers notice, for instance, a marked difference in the degree of narrative cohesion as they move from chapters 1 to 2. Boudjellal's representation nevertheless suggests that the past is only important in that it determines the present. The clinic, as a closed space, reunites several memory communities related to the Algerian War: one of the hospital's directors is a Sephardic Jew, one patient was involved in the Jeanson Network, another is the son of Algerian immigrants, and then there is Moktar. As all characters (including the others not mentioned here who are diverse in their own way) come together in this space, the convergence of traumatic pasts engages the various forms of memory: individual, familial, group, collective, and national. As a work of fiction grounded in historical truths, Boudjellal's comic book corresponds to what Mireille Rosello has termed "*the reparative in narratives*" (2010, 1, her emphasis). Building on Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora's seminal work, *La guerre d'Algérie: 1954–2004, la fin de l'amnésie*, Rosello examines narratives that underscore "the kind of memorial trace that must construct itself, in the present, when several memorial threads are forced to come into contact" (2010, 188). The fictional world created in *Le cousin harki* rests on the "national social fabric as that is made up of what appear, in other narratives, as distinct memorial threads" (Rosello 2010, 188). Here the various memorial threads (Harki and other) are not represented separately, but rather as an intricately woven fabric connecting all individuals and all memory communities despite their perceived differences and prejudices. How else would Julien's lamentations (Julien is the dope smoker) provoke unrelated memories in Moktar's subconscious? As a place of healing—and not necessarily of reparation or fixing—the clinic transforms into a space infused with considerable symbolic value, one in which the reparative in narrative (and reparative narratives) can surface.

Anne Sibran and Tronchet's *Là-bas* relies on narrative fragmentation as a way to articulate the reparative in narrative. Sibran's narrative focuses on the problematic relationship between father and daughter as well as on her father's mental decline in exile. From a psychological perspective, Alain's increasing despondency and disillusionment result in a fragmented vision of the present rather than the past. As Alain retreats to an imaginary Algeria so as to evade his disappointing present, Jeanne must actively fill in the gaps of his past (fragmented from her perspective because she is trying to reconstitute a memory that is not hers) and present (fragmented from Alain's perspective because he mentally returns to Algeria more frequently and more profoundly as narrative progresses) in her constitution of a cohesive narrative for readers. Alain's transition from coherence to dementia closely mirrors his mother's psychological trajectory after her arrival in Paris. Although the cycle does not continue with Jeanne who is still relatively young at the album's close and not defined by spatiotemporal exile, the fact that *Là-bas* can be characterized as a fragmented narrative of exile suggests the difficult integration of Pieds-Noirs into contemporary French society and even into their own families, whose subsequent generations have established a different and, arguably, more productive relationship with metropolitan France. Sibran and Tronchet's comic book does not exhibit the properties of Rosello's reparative in narrative explained above—at least not with respect to Alain and Rose, who fail to renounce their victimhood and who continue to reinvigorate social divisions in the present that stem from France's colonial past. Unable to help her father reconcile past and present, Jeanne merges them in a utopian landscape where Paris and Algiers meet, where contemporary French society and former French Algeria collide. Jeanne who is perhaps an unnecessary narrator in terms of Alain's Algerian past, plays a vital role in maintaining Alain's dominant fiction regarding French Algeria and his unique subject position that has been lost in exile. While she cannot fill in all narrative gaps, she attempts to create continuity—at least spatially—for her father in the present. Given the spatial, chronological, and even ideological shifts affecting Alain in exile, Jeanne's narrative in the present, or the overlap of her and her father's present, can only be fragmented in her attempts to deliver a cohesive narrative of trauma. This narrative is central to her understanding of her father and to her readers' understanding of the Pied-Noir community and its double bind.

Discussions about the Pied-Noir community are often polarizing given the threads that appear to bind this community to extremist politics in France (McCormack 2011, 1133). This polarization can be detected in the evolution of Anne Sibran's narratives in which she retells her father's story. In many ways, *Là-bas* represents a repackaging of Sibran's original novel, *Bleu-figuier* [The Blue Fig Tree], published four years earlier. Firstly, there is the notable use of paratext whose purpose is to contextualize narrative and to control reader reception. Secondly, the paratext alerts readers familiar with Sibran's novel that her perspective has changed since 1999, that her tone has softened and become less politicized with respect to the Pied-Noir community and her father. The nostalgic undertones associated with the scriptwriter's preface efface the negative representation of Mercadal in the earlier publication in which Jeanne struggles to understand and explain her father's dramatically modified behavior. Jeanne is described in the novel as "la seule à chercher un semblant de sens à ses silences ombrageux, ses colères subites, de plus en plus violentes, et cette mélancolie, entre index et majeur, quand la cendre du mégot lui brûlait le fond des yeux . . ." [the only one to find a semblance of meaning in his

touchy silences, his sudden fits of anger, more and more violent, and this melancholy, between his index and middle fingers, as cigarette ash burned deeply in his eyes . . .] (Sibran 1999, 222–23). After intentionally placing her hand on a wood-burning stove, Jeanne develops a strong filial attachment to her father based on their shared status as “wounded.” Jeanne’s superficial cutaneous wound becomes a metaphor for her father’s deep psychological wound.

This commonality does not produce the desired effect; Alain remains distant and detached, becoming more physically violent with his family. When Alain finally slaps Alice (Jeanne’s younger sister who does not appear as a character in *Là-bas*) with enough force to knock her to the ground, Jeanne realizes that he is no longer the father she once knew and loved. Another body, strange and unfamiliar, had taken his place unbeknownst to her: “Non content de dormir dans ses draps, de porter ses habits, *le corps* s’assoit à la place d’Alain, boit dans son verre” [Not satisfied with sleeping in his sheets, wearing his clothes, *the body* sits in Alain’s place, drinks from his glass] (Sibran 1999, 273, her emphasis). Instead of reflecting Tronchet’s images of a relatively jovial father figure who becomes increasingly weaker as narrative progresses, Sibran’s textual Alain transforms into a completely foreign entity, recognizable only in terms of his physical appearance. Although Jeanne continues in her attempts to familiarize Alice with the Alain-from-before—reminiscent of the comic book episode in which Jeanne discovers old vacation photos of happier times—, she fails to convince her sister of Alain’s goodness. Daily confrontations with “*le corps*” [the body] result in the germination of Jeanne’s own hatred for her father. Alain’s heart attack is subsequently celebrated as emancipatory rather than as a potential personal loss.

Once Jeanne is free to navigate formerly forbidden spaces, such as her father’s office at *Urbaine-Vie*, she discovers that he is a victim of metropolitan French society. After noticing footprints on Alain’s suit jacket worn the day of his heart attack, Jeanne finally understands why there are two “Alains” (Alain her father and Alain “*le corps*”). In the packed elevator where Alain experienced his myocardial infarction, no one came to his aid. Instead, the other passengers simply walked on top of him: “*Le corps* n’a jamais eu besoin d’estime, seulement de manger, secréter, déjecter . . . C’est sur Alain qu’ils ont marché. Sur ton père” [*The body* never needed respect, only to eat, secrete, expel . . . They trampled on Alain. On your father] (Sibran 1999, 287, her emphasis). The identification of Alain as a whipping boy comes late in Sibran’s novel doing little to erase or ease his previously negative representation. In certain respects, Sibran’s novel is more effective than her comic book due to the novel’s realistic representation of domestic violence and of victims who become perpetrators—a topic that is underdeveloped in her comic book. Another reason why the novel constitutes a more polished narrative of loss is the fact that Jeanne never falls prey to Alain’s “nostalgia.” Instead of romanticizing French Algeria as some comics do, the novel engages critically with Alain as a Pied-Noir and with the colonialist ideology often associated with Pied-Noir identity. It is therefore significant that Sibran’s narrator uses toponyms for chapter headings with only one spatial reference to Algeria, “Marché de la Lyre à Alger” [the Lyre Market in Algiers] (1999, 289). By selecting chapter headings that refer to Alain’s passage through non-Algerian spaces (e.g., Gibraltar, areas of Paris), the narrator suggests that Pied-Noirs like Alain struggle to construct a post-Algerian identity because they do not have access to Pied-Noir sites of memory. Even though the cartoon Jeanne allows Alain to return to Algeria through image and text and create hybrid cityscapes for him, Jeanne in *Bleu-figuier* forces Alain to deal with the present in Paris and other spaces of exile. *Là-bas* lets Alain remain in mourning while *Bleu-figuier* encourages him to move to a more productive, melancholic state. Unsurprisingly, Alain does not live in Jeanne’s alternate ending in the novel but rather dies so that a young Algerian boy can become the massacre’s sole survivor. In contrast, the ending of *Là-bas* depicts a utopian vision of French Algeria, one in which all social classes, races, and religions peacefully cohabitate.

The comic book’s ending is problematic in that it fails to criticize or at least question the politics undergirding Pied-Noir communal memory, particularly today with members aligning themselves with nationalist parties and the extreme right (McCormack 2011, 1133). Alain appears to be apolitical, walking past political graffiti without noticing. He is politically contextualized without being politicized. Sibran’s original character is, however, highly politicized. He tags buildings with pro-OAS slogans, an act that later results in having a fatwa of sorts issued against him by the FLN. Jeanne comes to understand that her exiled father fails to integrate French society not because of the existence of Pied-Noir stereotypes, but because Alain unconsciously embodies them with his “colonialisme invoué” [undeclared colonialism] (Sibran 1999, 265). Alain’s political activism, adherence to anti-republican ideologies or “communitarianism,” and transformation into a physically violent father justify the way his colleagues and neighbors treat him as well as the insults hurled by Jeanne’s and Alice’s classmates. In the novel, the father’s trauma does not necessarily become the daughter’s story as in the comic book adaptation; instead, it becomes Jeanne’s personal trauma as she is left fighting for independence from her father, *le boucher* [the butcher]. In contrast to Tronchet’s visual



representation of Alain, Sibran's novel paints a much darker picture. Not only a foreign body that usurps Alain's place in the Mercadal household, this other Alain takes on the appearance of "le boucher de Coisevaux" [the Coisevaux butcher] in Jeanne's imagination. After being taunted at school, Jeanne becomes obsessed with searching for evidence of dried blood on her father's hands, for evidence that they took another human's life. When Jeanne learns that her father killed a man during the war, she resolves to embrace his identity as "boucher" just as she accepts her own identity as the "fille du boucher" [the butcher's daughter] (Sibran 1999, 149).

If the source of trauma remains somewhat unclear in *Là-bas* (is it the market shooting, Alain's forced exile or Alain's sister Éliane's death?), the various overlapping traumas in *Bleu-figuier* all come back to the drive-by shooting. Had Alain died at the Marché de la Lyre, he would not have left Algeria, suffered through years of humiliation in Paris, and he would not have victimized his daughters. Despite the central importance of this market space, Sibran does not include a postcard of the Marché de la Lyre in her comic book preface. This editorial decision once again recalls Barthes' notion of the punctum. Sibran might have felt that the emotional charge of such an image (specifically, the emotional charge that this image has on her and her father) would have been lost on her readers. According to the narrator, Alain essentially died that day in Algiers. For after that event, he would never be the same: "Le cœur mort, enseveli à Alger, il ne restait plus qu'à abattre le corps" [The heart dead, buried in Algiers, killing the body was all that was left to do] (Sibran 1999, 194). Indeed Alain (in reality his middle name) prefers to go by Édouard (his first name) in France so as to assume a new identity that is incongruous with his Algerian past.

Finally, after repeatedly visualizing and narrating the market scene, Alain discovers that he is unable to articulate this traumatic event as it happened. While reciting the tale to his brother-in-law for the umpteenth time, Alain concludes shouting: "NON! TU NE SAIS RIEN! Je te l'ai peut-être raconté cent fois mais je ne t'ai pas tout dit!" [NO! YOU KNOW NOTHING! Maybe I told you about it a hundred times, but I didn't tell you everything!] (Sibran 1999, 251). As the event slowly seeps from memory, it must enter the realm of imagination so as to be transmitted to subsequent generations, so as not to be forgotten. Passing a metaphorical torch to his daughter, Alain grants Jeanne access to the event for the constitution of her own postmemory. In the end, understanding that Alain will never successfully transition from mourning to a superior state of melancholia, Jeanne retells the Marché de la Lyre massacre and, in the process, offers him a space of redemption located in the past.

I have attempted here to explore the intersections of reality and fiction, of memory and postmemory, and of mourning and melancholia in Sibran's representation of Pied-Noir trauma in general (both in terms of exile and its repercussions) and of the Marché de la Lyre shooting in particular. However, Sibran's fictional representation of these overlapping traumas has itself undergone an important evolution from childhood memories to novel to comics, one that appears to blur these intersections. Why the lighter portrayal of Mercadal in *Là-bas* in comparison to *Bleu-figuier*? Why change the narrative's ending so that Alain and the other shooting victims can live in a utopian space that no longer exists—and actually never existed? Do these changes suggest that Sibran has forgiven her father and has finally come to terms with her Pied-Noir heritage? Or do they speak more to the demands of the comic book market in which a happy ending would be an easier sell to young adults and children? While I can only hypothesize as to why these modifications were introduced, I believe that this "series" constitutes a work in progress—Sibran's own process of working through trauma—rather than two completed publications. Potentially dissatisfied with previous representations of the Pied-Noir community and its specific ethical dilemmas, Sibran continues to rethink this story of death and loss. Sibran's definitive renunciation of the first-person subject position suggests that she has yet to fully assimilate these traumatic memories. In this way and despite the different narrative omissions and revisions that occur from novel to comics, the unspeakable continues to defy articulation just as the unrepresentable appears to reject the various forms of visual and textual representation, leaving the reader to wonder which elements constitute fact and which constitute fiction. Or is it, perhaps, the narrative indecision and inconsistency within this series that most appropriately convey Pied-Noir trauma to readers? To return to Mieke Bal's statement that narrative should embrace the repressive and dissociative qualities of memory (1999, ix), Sibran demonstrates with *Bleu-figuier* and *Là-bas* that it is the inability to accept narrative coherence that best reflects the traumatic experience.

Even though Sibran's critique of the Pied-Noir community becomes less evident in the transition from novel to comics, reading *Bleu-figuier* and *Là-bas* in tandem familiarizes readers with Sibran's own personal double bind with respect to her Pied-Noir heritage. If Sibran's critical position could be interpreted as political ambivalence—especially if one only takes into account the comic book adaptation of her novel—, other cartoonists are more candid. From this perspective, Morvandiau's work offers a counterexample to Sibran's. In *Le Transfert d'une mémoire* [The Transfer of a Memory], Benjamin Stora traces the popularity of French

extreme right-wing and enthusiastically xenophobic political parties such as Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front (FN). Interested in the transference of the memory of French Algeria onto contemporary French soil, Stora argues in his introduction that

[p]rès de quarante ans après l'indépendance de l'Algérie en 1962, la répétition des situations vécues pendant cette histoire coloniale semble de plus en plus présente dans l'actualité française. Par delà le processus qui a vu la séquence guerre d'Algérie s'enraciner dans le débat franco-français . . . c'est en fait l'ensemble du déplacement de valeurs, habitudes et sentiments élaborés au temps de la longue période de l'Algérie française (132 ans) qui doit être analysé. (1999, 6)

[nearly forty years after Algerian independence in 1962, the recurrence of situations experienced during this colonial history appear more and more present in French current events. Above and beyond the process that witnessed the rooting of the Algerian War's aftermath in Franco-French debates, it's actually the entire displacement of values, habits and feelings developed throughout the long period of French Algeria (132 years) that must be analyzed.]

According to Stora, continued encounters between Algerian immigrants and Pieds-Noirs in France have prolonged the colonial memory of Algeria as a "lost country" and fuel the FN's political impetus and popularity among voters looking to combat Islamic fundamentalism and France's growing population of Arab Muslims portrayed as an inassimilable population (McCormack 2011, 1133). For Stora, the Algerian War has entered the French imaginary as another American Civil (as opposed to Vietnam) War. The loss of French Algeria establishes a hypothetical situation for American readers who might wonder what would have happened had the American South successfully seceded from the Union. If the United States and the American South in particular are forever licking the wounds of this national conflict (a dangerously close secession for the North and a failed secession for the South), then it stands to reason that the loss of territory—and with it the loss of tradition, cultural patrimony, etc.—would displace not only people onto metropolitan soil but also, according to Stora, a "*sudiste*" mentality 132 years in the making.

The *sudisme* that Stora describes pertains to those veterans, former OAS activists, and Pieds-Noirs who share a particular vision of French Algeria and who fully embrace aspects of European colonization in the Americas as well as nineteenth-century American expansionism rooted in the tenets of Manifest Destiny. For these individuals, Stora argues that "le modèle de cette société coloniale, aujourd'hui disparue, reste plus que jamais valable. Ils disent que le combat pour cette cause n'est jamais fini" [the model for this colonial society, today gone, remains valid more than ever. They say the struggle for this cause is never over] (1999, 14). Although this *sudiste* vision of French Algeria continues to affect pockets of Pied-Noir collective memory (i.e., those that condone the exploitation of colonized peoples), this vision has also resulted in the mythification of French Algeria now perceived as a lost Eden whose peaceful existence was disrupted by war and not colonial inequalities (Stora 1999, 73). In many respects, Ferrandez's series (specifically his depiction of Octave) subscribes to this process of mythification just as Dan and Galandon's development of their central protagonist, Paul, does. Yet Paul and Octave are fictional characters whose identities are intimately linked to the existence of French Algeria. Paul dies at the end of *Tahya El-Djazair* just as Octave's story ends before he reaches France. Contrary to Ferrandez and Dan and Galandon, Sibran and Tronchet and Morvandiau propose narratives predicated upon Pied-Noir exile, upon the irreversible and already present loss of French Algeria. Again in contrast to the somewhat ambiguous nature of Sibran's perception of her father and the Pied-Noir population, Morvandiau engages more critically with contemporary Pied-Noir politics in France, and more explicitly with the relationship between the Pied-Noir community and the FN.

If French and Algerian national histories eclipse Morvandiau's family history throughout the majority of narrative, the cartoonist concludes his comic book with a reference to Le Pen and his grandfather's affiliation with Le Pen's political party (McKinney 2013a, 187; Miller 2011, 115). On the final double page, Morvandiau juxtaposes two images: a close-up of Le Pen's mouth during a 1962 interview on the left page and a portrait of Morvandiau's grandparents on the right. A narrative voice-over describing the wave of official condemnations of war crimes including torture and rape is positioned above Le Pen's 1962 self as he openly admits to committing these atrocities: "Je n'ai rien à cacher. J'ai torturé parce qu'il fallait le faire" [I have nothing to hide. I tortured because it was necessary] (Morvandiau 2007, n.p.). Here the visual alignment between Le Pen the torturer and Morvandiau's deceased grandparents on neighboring pages allows the cartoonist to bring his narrative full circle. This final transition in which he openly condemns manifestations of colonial ire in contemporary France (his grandfather is described as having been "sensible aux sirènes sordides du Front national" [sensitive to the National Front's sordid Sirens] (Morvandiau 2007, n.p.)), reestablishes the relationship between French Algeria, racist discourse, political extremism, and Morvandiau's family, and ultimately culminates in Morvandiau's own self-examination as the descendant of Pieds-Noirs (McKinney 2013a, 187). On the final page, Morvandiau ends with an existentialist enigma rather than the narrative closure privileged in Sibran and Tronchet's album. Confronted with yet another manifestation of colonial racism (a friend says: "Mon père, il dit que les Arabes empêchent les Portugais d'avoir un HLM" [My

dad, he says Arabs prevent the Portuguese from getting subsidized housing] (Morvandiau 2007, n.p.), the narrator pictured as a young boy in 1984 responds to this criticism, stating this his father is Arab. Confused, his friend questions the narrator who ends the album with: “Bah, à ton avis. T’es quoi quand tu viens d’Algérie?” [Well in your opinion. What are you when you’re from Algeria?] (Morvandiau 2007, n.p.). This final rhetorical question that Morvandiau appears himself unable to answer summarizes the complexity of Pied-Noir identity: how do or can Pieds-Noirs relate to Algeria and contemporary France? According to Morvandiau:

by echoing the rather enigmatic wording of the title, “*D’Algérie*,” this episode enabled me to gain some perspective on issues of identity, individual and collective, past and present, that preceded the creation of this book. I don’t know if there could be a “resolution” of the history of France’s relationship with Algeria but it seems clear that artistic expression has a role to play in making it possible to speak of this. (Miller 2011, 115–18)

Less concerned with the Pied-Noir community than with veterans of the Algerian War and manifestations of France’s cultural pluralism, Manu Larcenet’s series, *Le combat ordinaire*, is replete with references to contemporary politics, including Le Pen’s advancement to the second round of the 2002 presidential elections (Miller 2007b, 168). The series broaches social issues such as unemployment, immigration, and xenophobia on which representatives of the FN have capitalized. For instance, the narrative focus of *Les quantités négligeables* [Negligible Quantities] (the second volume of the series) is Marco’s return to photography with an exhibit honoring his father’s shipyard coworkers who fear losing their jobs in the months ahead. While this particular subject appears far removed from the Algerian War, Marco’s reasoning for creating the exhibit echoes Naïma’s—the series’ only North African character’s—concerns regarding France’s North African community (Miller 2007a, 261; 2007b, 168). Marco explains to workers Bastounet, Pablo, and Ümit that “dans les grandes villes, on oublie vite . . . Les gens croient que leurs bureaux, leurs immeubles, leurs voitures se construisent tout seuls” [in big cities, we quickly forget . . . people believe that their offices, their buildings, their cars build themselves] (Larcenet 2004, 29). In the previous volume, Naïma responds to Le Pen’s popularity among voters with: “Les Français ont tellement peur pour leurs maisons qu’ils en oublient que ce sont nos parents qui les ont construites” [The French are so afraid for their homes that they forget it was our parents who built them] (Larcenet 2008, 38). Here Larcenet underscores legitimate concerns expressed by France’s working class, which has a distinctly cosmopolitan face resulting from decades of immigration. Bastounet, the only blue-collar worker with a French surname, suffers alongside France’s “undesirables” and, in so doing, establishes a new postcolonial solidarity based on the marginalization of lower-class white males who find themselves relegated to the periphery along with France’s immigrants.<sup>8</sup>

Fearing unemployment due to increased immigration, Bastounet votes for Le Pen in 2002 (Miller 2007b, 169). When Marco confronts him, he responds violently: “Tu ne sais plus comment ça se passe ici! Tu sais plus comment on vit!” [You don’t know anymore how things are here! You don’t know how we live anymore!] (Larcenet 2004, 30). Larcenet’s depiction of the elections is one of understanding and concern. In addition to elucidating certain truths regarding immigration, Larcenet focuses on genuine fears of the working class, namely the rising unemployment rate. If Bastounet loses his job, he will no longer be able to provide for his family. The real issue is therefore not Bastounet’s contempt for immigrants—his friendship with Portuguese (Pablo) and Turkish (Ümit) characters disproves this contempt—but rather the dissolution of his dominant fiction. Kaja Silverman argues that industrialized societies have created a dominant fiction or ideological reality that depends on the unity of the family as a model for social formation and on the adequacy of the male subject. When this fiction is upheld, the (male) subject can claim “a normative identity” (Silverman 1992, 15). It is therefore easier for those in Bastounet’s position (for example, those who voted for Le Pen in 2002 and, arguably, for Sarkozy in 2007) to blame social scapegoats like France’s cultural Others.

Literary and cultural scholar Anne Donadey would probably stipulate that Bastounet’s reaction is symptomatic of France’s seemingly unresolved Algerian past: “The war, rather than being simply relived through memory, is actually being waged again and again on French territory through racially motivated incidents and racist discourse” (2001, 8).<sup>9</sup> Similarly to Alain Mercadal who would rather take refuge in his delusions, Bastounet prefers to uphold his dominant fiction by abandoning his family before France’s declining economy can metaphorically castrate him. He voluntarily becomes the male who refuses to (as opposed to cannot) take care of his family. Marco’s brother, Naïma, and their daughter Chahida (much like Boudjellal’s fictional family in *Jambon-Beur*) constitute the only stable family in Larcenet’s series. Emphasis on their family unit suggests that through immigration and the resultant multiculturalism, France has been able to renew itself and create new social realities in which, to quote Stora, “peut alors commencer une remémoration tranquille de l’histoire coloniale, débarrassée des excitations et des haines, où pourront être reconnus et nommés les crimes du passé, mais aussi les rencontres et les brassages qui irriguent la France



(Miller 2007a, 265–67; 2007b, 172–74). Later, when his father asks Mahmoud why he refuses to visit family in Algeria, the child protagonist replies that he no longer wants to be Algerian, blaming his father for both his Algerian identity and even for his illness. From these brief examples, the reader understands that Mahmoud has internalized colonialist discourse and now equates his Algerian-ness with disease. The fact that Mahmoud suffers from poliomyelitis in *Petit Polio* and *Jambon-Beur* reflects Boudjellal's own struggle with this debilitating physical handicap.<sup>10</sup>

As comics scholars Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas emphasize in their analysis of the medicalization of narrative in *Petit Polio*, “[a] gap . . . exists between the title, foregrounding polio, and the texts which de-emphasize the disease. This implicit contradiction signals a conflict at the level of medicine and disease, suggesting the importance of other, less obvious medical thematics” (2008, 299). Here they refer to Boudjellal's emphasis on mental illness such as post-traumatic stress disorder triggered, in one instance, when a French soldier (César) recently back from Algeria hears Arabic spoken on the streets of Toulon (Figure 7.6) (Miller 2007a, 268; 2007b, 175). In this scene, César's increasing anxiety is well visualized. As he and his wife turn down a smaller street, they initially notice that people around them are speaking Arabic. What first appears as normal conversation (written in Arabic script and therefore incomprehensible to non-Arabic speakers including César), soon invades the panel in which readers see a close-up of César's face and horror-filled blue eyes. The Arabic-language speech balloons invade his now reduced panel space (reduced to the width of his shoulders), creating a claustrophobic sensation for readers who imagine César's psychological distress as he becomes engulfed in this familiar, yet unfamiliar language. This moment soon provokes a panic attack, causing César to transition from immobility in the panel described above to flight in the last panel on the page. Boudjellal stated in an interview with Mark McKinney, “it's not about racism in the case of my character César. Instead, it's a kind of traumatic wound from the Algerian War” (McKinney 2011b, 9).

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, post-traumatic stress disorder is an anxiety disorder caused by trauma and whose symptoms fall into one of three categories: “re-experiencing,” “avoidance,” and “hyperarousal” (NIMH n.d.). César, whose illness was considerably more difficult than Mahmoud's to diagnose in the 1960s, exhibits all symptoms, particularly hyperarousal. César becomes overtly aggressive toward Mahmoud's father, his neighbor and former friend, when this character visits César in his apartment. Rather than focus on the physical, which is easily identifiable and often attributable to a specific virus or bacteria, mental illness and its recurrence in narrative (notably in Boudjellal's work, but also in Larcenet's, Morvandiau's, and Sibran and Tronchet's comic books) indicate that the notion of a diseased past is problematic. Instead, cartoonists put forward the notion of a diseased present—a cancer or gangrene infecting contemporary society—directly caused by France's colonial past but whose manifestations differ greatly among individuals and whose numerous triggers are not yet known.

The medicalization of narrative serves thematic and aesthetic functions. There exists a particular visualization of “medicalized” narratives that facilitates the constitution of (post)memory and leaves room for the reparative in narrative. By reading war comics as examples of postmemory, readers are invited to take part in the psychoanalytic process central to healing. In the comics studied here, postmemory transforms into a critical inquiry of trauma narratives, grounded in an active reflection on how memory and national history affect the present. As postmemorial narratives, the comics studied in this chapter contribute not only to personal and family healing (the reconciliation between parent and child), they also contribute to a broader national healing. Here readers are presented with a nonlinear concept of time in which dominant memories no longer replace minority memories. All memories become part of a national narrative mosaic that is constantly evolving and growing. Here memories no longer compete with each other; alternatively, they interact and negotiate meaning. The medicalization of trauma narrative—specifically postmemorial trauma narrative—hints at the therapeutic nature of artistic creation. Similar to Larcenet's protagonist who undergoes intensive psychotherapy in his attempt to understand why he can no longer photograph and thus represent trauma, cartoonists use their art in various ways so as to demonstrate the deficiencies of national representations of the Algerian War that valorize certain memories while discrediting others. The resulting political and social tensions have caused a diseased present whose symptoms include the relative popularity of right-wing politics, xenophobic and racist tendencies, general amnesties for war crimes, civil unrest in marginalized populations, and even historical revisionism proposed at regular intervals. The medicalization of narrative therefore goes beyond the simple representation of medicine in trauma narratives. In the words of Douglas and Malti-Douglas, it directs “the reader away from an ideology of victimization and resentment” (2008, 304), and offers the possibility of working through trauma without imposing a definitive solution that risks becoming another monolithic national construction. Postmemorial comics have considerable value because, to quote Morvandiau, they can actively resist “monolithic dogmatism” with “living creativity” (Miller 2011, 121).



## NOTES

1. Until 1993, Guy Pervillé diligently recorded and commented on scholarly publications about the war. Other historians have since continued where Pervillé left off (McCormack 2007, 25).
2. See, for example, Ehlers, Hackmann, and Michael's 2004 study, "Intrusive Re-Experiencing in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Phenomenology, Theory, and Therapy."
3. See Mark McKinney's edited volume, *History and Politics in French-Language Comics and Graphic Novels*, for a detailed explanation of this term. McKinney's volume includes an introductory section titled "French-Language Comics Terminology and Referencing."
4. The first five panels depict Algeria while the remaining four depict the Berry region and the town of Prissac. Morvandiau explained in an e-mail correspondence that the image included here allows for a smoother narrative and spatial transition between Algeria and Prissac. I would like to express my gratitude to Morvandiau for providing this important clarification.
5. In Sibran's original novel, the insult is harsher. Alain discovers a sign that reads: "Édouard Mercadal = bourreau S.S." [Édouard Mercadal = S.S. executioner] under which is written: "Retourne dans ton pays sale bicot" [Go back to your country, dirty *bicot* (racist term used to refer to North African Arabs)] (Sibran 1999, 73).
6. See my essay, "A Father's Pain, a Daughter's Story: Transcending the Trauma of Loss," for a detailed presentation of how Sibran's project evolved from novel to comic book.
7. McKinney mentions that another scholar, Catherine Dana, has written about this doubling (Je-Anne) in *Bleu-figuier* (2011c, 149; see Dana 2005, 224).
8. See chapter 9 of Ann Miller's *Reading Bande Dessinée: Critical Approaches to French-Language Comic Strip* and her article 2007 "Postcolonial Identities" for a close reading of Larcenet's series as an example of postcolonial comics.
9. To this effect, Mireille Rosello cites the 2001 France-Algeria soccer match (see my introduction), during which fans booed the French national anthem and later overran the field, causing the game to end prematurely (2005, 18–19).
10. In our 2009 interview, Boudjellal stated that aside from their cultural heritage and childhood malady, he and Mahmoud are quite different.



## Conclusion

### *The Postcolonial Turn in Teaching, Remembering, and Cartooning*

Education, the media, and family are central to the transmission of a nation's historical knowledge and cultural traditions. They determine how histories are written, how wars are remembered, how collective traumas are experienced, how national identities are constructed, and how contemporary societies deal with postcolonial legacies. Teachers constitute the central fulcrum on which these vectors pivot. Teachers are limited by State-mandated curricula and their own cultural biases, which often come from mainstream media and inherited family perspectives. While teachers are free to choose their methodology and pedagogical materials, most restrict their presentation to that of school textbooks, which do not always acknowledge the most recent trends in war historiography.

French society from one generation to the next—and from one *program* to the next—inherits different and often conflicting views of the Algerian War and of France and Algeria's shared history. If, as Jo McCormack has argued, “[w]hat is taught in schools is perhaps one of the last widely shared cultures in what is an increasingly fragmented society” (2007, 172), then comics as an example of popular culture intimately linked to mass culture, canonical literature, and scholarship provides an opportunity for readers to explore questions of representation as well as the limitations and possibilities of Franco-Algerian postcolonial relations. As popular culture, comics have the potential to reach and affect sectors of the population excluded by other genres regardless of how fragmented that population has become. An excellent example is the international appeal of Jacques Ferrandez's series, *Carnets d'Orient*, which has enjoyed considerable commercial success on both sides of the Mediterranean. This is not to suggest that Ferrandez's series and others like it should supplant critical histories and school textbooks to teach the history of the Algerian War. All texts serve a purpose in the transmission of history and memory. The self-reflexive and meta-cognitive nature of comics does, however, invite readers to challenge its representation of history as well as other historical representations reconditioned in comics.

In this book, I have argued that by recycling textual and iconographic source material, cartoonists confer a measure of historical, biographical, and representational accuracy on their comics. This strategy inserts their work into existent professional and reputational structures, elevating their status in the cultural hierarchy. While comics' paraliterary status still stigmatizes the medium (i.e., students fail to take its representation of history seriously), war comics use their marginal status to broach taboo topics such as postwar treatment of the Harkis and Pieds-Noirs. Comics are well positioned to discuss difficult issues and to popularize historical taboos while offering direct or indirect commentaries on how the war and Franco-Algerian history have been and are remembered, historicized, and transmitted. The recycling of problematic modes of representation like Orientalist tropes and iconic images of war specifically engages readers who would recognize these images seen in school or elsewhere. As a form of popular culture, comics force readers to question why the re-contextualization of such images might challenge dominant discourses and the topoi they inspire in the visual and verbal arts. Morvandiau explains the role of comics and artistic expression in the face of ideology: “For someone working on the collective imaginary, dominant discourses or ideology—all characterised by what can be said and what must be left unsaid—the potential offered by comic art is extraordinary, as much in the relation to the analytical decoding as in the effect produced” (Miller 2011, 114).

The recycling of various sources also implicates cartoonists who create an irreconcilable tension between colonialist/Orientalist motifs and astutely anticolonialist narratives. I have argued that this tension, often existing between comics' visual and verbal components, is symptomatic of a postcolonial paradox. Regardless of their cultural background, postcolonial cartoonists are simultaneously drawn to and repulsed by colonial iconography that has, for the most part, negatively influenced the depiction of Franco-Algerian relations in literature and art since the nineteenth century. Rather than ease this dialectical tension and resolve the postcolonial paradox, cartoonists have used their art to understand the relationship between Self and Other and between their colonial heritage and present postcolonial discourses. Although comic book representations

of the Algerian War raise more questions about postcolonial relationships than they answer, their contribution to current debates on this historical period and the stain it has left on French collective memory is undeniable. If cartoonists appear to perpetuate symbolic violence and disseminate hegemonic discourses, the desired effect is to challenge such notions and to propose alternatives to how readers view national history and trans-Mediterranean relations. Jacques Ferrandez, for example, recycles erotic images to give voice to the silenced and objectified women of colonial postcards; and the Algerian cartoonist Sid Ali Melouah illustrates postwar Algeria as seen through the eyes of a Pied-Noir. This desire to walk a mile in another's shoes is congruent with the fact that several cartoonists studied here are *frontaliers* or cultural mediators who navigate an ambiguous third space located in between French and Algerian culture.

Because *frontaliers* like Ferrandez, Morvandiau, Anne Sibran, Denis Merezette (Pieds-Noirs), Farid Boudjellal, Azouz Begag, Djillali Defali (Beurs), and Sid Ali Melouah (Algerian living in France) identify with more than one memory community, they can claim insider and outsider status with respect to certain sectors of French and Algerian society. Their narratives sometimes grieve the failure to create a utopian (French) Algeria in which all memory groups peacefully coexist. This proposed utopian space would end their constant fluctuation between French and Algerian cultural spaces and would resolve their feelings of not quite belonging in either France or Algeria. Yet as liminal personalities, these cartoonists contribute to the creation of a productive postcolonial cultural space in increasingly globalized societies marked by diasporas, mass exoduses, and ethno-cultural blending. Even though not all cartoonists studied here are *frontaliers*, most incorporate *frontalier* characters into their narratives. The omnipresence of *frontalier* figures as real or fictional individuals in war comics suggests that, despite the trauma of decolonization, the Algerian War did not efface colonial contact. Instead, the violent separation of France and Algeria resulted in the displacement of several memory communities who are trying to make sense of their situation while inserting themselves into societies that selectively deny the realities of this separation.

The *frontalier* perspective of war comics counteracts the discourse inherent in secondary school textbooks and mainstream media in which personal narratives are discarded in favor of a distanced, impersonal approach to national history. In France and arguably elsewhere, the existence of communal memories is often considered dangerous for national unity. According to Nicolas Bancel and Pascal Blanchard, "la France étant une République, il ne saurait être question d'envisager le corps social sous l'angle des communautés, quoiqu'elles existent et se pensent, de plus en plus, comme telles" [because France is a republic, there can be no question here of considering society in terms of communities, even though they exist and increasingly think of themselves as communities] (n.d., 7). Postcolonial comics that engage with postmemory are complex and certainly capable of encouraging disunity among readers. More importantly, however, these comics prioritize social unity and tolerance through the exploration of difference and cultural hybridism. They demonstrate that communitarianism is not antithetical to republicanism. Instead, communitarianism is shown to be necessary for successful social cohesion. Comic book conventions allow the reader to experience narrative through the eyes of select, usually *frontalier*, protagonists: panels are often drawn so that reader and protagonist share the same visual perspective. Consequently, the personal perspectives of *frontalier* characters such as Octave and Samia in *Carnets d'Orient*, Taklhit and Cosme in *Azrayen'*, Pierrot and Ali in *Pierrot de Bab el Oued*, Alain Mercadal in *Là-bas*, Mahmoud in *Petit Polio*, Daru in *L'hôte*, Paul and Asia in *Tahya El-Djazaïr*, and Marie Delmas in *Leçons coloniales* among many others take precedence, encouraging reader identification with *frontalier* personalities. In this way, cartoonists promote transcultural interpretations of Franco-Algerian history and suggest that viewing this history from a distinctly French or Algerian perspective is unrealistic and will only deepen the rift between these nations and between various communities.

In addition to offering personal perspectives on the Algerian War through fictional *frontalier* characters, several cartoonists have used their work to explore a personal connection to French Algeria and its decolonization. Because these cartoonists have a deeply personal relationship to this space and historical period (i.e., the war directly affected members of their family), their narratives represent instances of postmemory that examine parental memories through the lens of history, collective memory, and personal experience. As reparative narratives, these comics initiate dialogue between parent and child in order to resolve conflict stemming from political trauma. Frank Giroud, for instance, was able to discuss the war with his father, a French soldier in Algeria, thanks to his work on *Azrayen'*. The notion of postmemory bridges the gap between memory and history. Often *frontaliers* or liminal personalities, guardians of postmemory endeavor to reconcile official history/collective memory and family history/memory. More so than any other medium, comics incorporate material traces of the past into narrative, allowing cartoonists to engage with various modes of representation and historical discourses. The result is a unique narrative mosaic that underscores the relationship between history and memory, between the individual and the collective, and between first and subsequent generations.

Reading comics as instances of postmemory allows readers to understand how this medium transmits history and memory. By re-contextualizing historical facts and images in personalized narratives, albums offer a humanized approach to historical abstractions. Readers identify with characters whose lives have been disrupted by war. Fictional and semifictional narratives visualize for readers the anonymous victims of political trauma. The visual component of comics serves an important purpose in the humanization process. For children, students, and adults, comics offer a nonacademic point of entry into Franco-Algerian history and encourage further inquiry thanks to frequent allusions to more scholarly publications. Since the Algerian War remains part of the recent past, most French people know someone who was directly affected by the war as either a participant or a victim. Children and adults have the opportunity to discuss this difficult memory and moment of national history with a family member, teacher, colleague, or friend. As it has been demonstrated throughout this study, comics provide fodder for conversations about history, national identity, and the impact of political trauma.

Although I have found nearly forty albums in which the Algerian War is represented, I have not found evidence that cartoonists working in France are as interested in other wars of decolonization/independence. Sandrine Lemaire notes a similar trend in French secondary school textbooks: “l’accent mis sur la guerre d’Algérie, abordée comme exemple de la décolonisation violente dont la torture serait la manifestation la plus significative, tend à la fois à réduire le fait colonial à cette seule dimension traumatique et à occulter toute la période précédente” [the focus on the Algerian War, cited as an example of violent decolonization of which torture is the most significant indication, tends to simultaneously reduce colonialism to a single traumatic dimension and cover up the entire preceding period] (2006, 103). Because schools emphasize the violence of the Algerian War and the army’s use of torture, schoolchildren, who later become adult citizens, are largely ignorant of French colonial history, decolonization in general, and the complexities of the Algerian War in particular (Lemaire 2006, 104). Yet the frequency with which the war is depicted in popular culture (comics and detective fiction<sup>1</sup>), literature, and film suggests that the war has played a major role in the construction of French national identity. More so than other genres, comics engage with seminal texts and images related to the war so as to challenge founding mythologies and to transmit a postmemory grounded in historical fact, family history and memory, and the war’s misrepresentation in collective memory and national history. Comics therefore provide a fictional and sometimes nonfictional context within which readers can study the Algerian War and how it has been documented and decontextualized in French metanarratives.

But why do cartoonists assign greater importance to the Algerian War than to other moments in French colonial history and decolonization? This is not to say that the Algerian War is the only war portrayed in comics. Cartoonists are publishing on other wars of decolonization, albeit less frequently. Albums depicting the French Indochina War (1946–1954), for example, include Romain Slocombe’s *La nuit de Saïgon* [The Night of Saigon], Denis Lapière’s *Mono Jim: Le carrefour de Nâm-Pha* [Mono Jim: The Intersection of Nâm-Pha], Frank Giroud and Christian Lax’s *Les oubliés d’Annam*, select volumes from Daniel Pecqueur and Franz’s series *Thomas Noland*, and, more recently, Clément Baloup’s two-volume series (soon to be three) *Mémoires de Viet Kieu* [Viet-Kieu Memories]. Mark McKinney devotes considerable attention to the representation of colonial Indochina and the French Indochina War in *Redrawing French Empire in Comics*.

Instead of depicting the colonial period or even the origins of the Algerian War, cartoonists working in the field present a limited view of events—Jacques Ferrandez’s ten-volume *Carnets* represents an important exception. While this tendency echoes textbook presentations of French national history, the fact that several cartoonists have a personal connection to French Algeria and the war suggests that they depict moments and places that are part of their personal heritage. For instance, Frank Giroud’s decision to set his narrative in Kabylia during the winter of 1957 stems from the discovery of his father’s war diary. The writing of postmemorial narratives (as opposed to historical fiction) requires cartoonists to select narrative parameters (time, place, events, and characters) that illustrate their deep personal connection to history and reflect parental memory. If the Algerian War frequently appears in popular culture, it is perhaps because this war has caused more family rifts than other wars of decolonization. Several cartoonists focus on difficult family relationships and the shutdown of communication between parent and child. Because the State has taken several decades to broach certain topics related to the war such as torture and the Harkis, these “forgotten” or, rather, forbidden subjects now constitute a central focus for writers, artists, historians, and textbook publishers. It is therefore logical that cartoonists, as producers of culture, would also devote attention to these historical taboos. The recent publication of Fred Neidhardt’s *Les pieds-noirs à la mer* [(Throw the) Pieds-Noirs in the Sea] (2014),<sup>2</sup> François Duprat’s *Mon cousin dans la mort* [My Cousin in Death] (2014), Baru and Pierre Place’s *Le silence de Lounès* [Lounès’ Silence] (2013), Didier Daeninckx and Mako’s *La main rouge* [The Red Hand] (2013), Jacques Ferrandez’s adaptation of Albert Camus’ *L’étranger* (2013), Daniel Blancou’s *Retour à*

*Saint-Laurent-des-Arabs* [Return to the Arabs' Saint-Laurent] (2012),<sup>3</sup> Jean-Pierre Guéno's *Paroles de la guerre d'Algérie, 1954–1962* [Words of the Algerian War: 1954–1962] (2012), Laurent Maffre's *Demain, demain: Nanterre bidonville de la folie, 1962–1966* [Tomorrow, Tomorrow. Nanterre Shantytown of Madness: 1962–1966] (2012), Jeanne Puchol's *Charonne–Bou Kadir* (2011), Jérôme Ruillier's *Les Mohamed. D'après le livre MÉMOIRES D'IMMIGRÉS de Yamina Benguigui* [The Mohameds. Based on Yamina Benguigui's Book MEMORIES OF IMMIGRANTS] (2011), and Benoît Blary and Hervé Loiselet's *20 ans de guerre* [Twenty Years of War] (2010) attest to public interest in the Algerian War and its after-effects, now considered topoi in French cultural production. Several of these comics engage with postmemory in the ways explored throughout *this volume*. Such publications can only further current discussions and ensure that a critical postmemory of the Algerian War is transmitted to future generations. The postcolonial comics studied here use postmemory as a more complex approach to memory making, one that keeps historical questions alive, decenters cohesive national narratives, and makes history visual and personal. From this perspective, comics succeed where major vectors of memory transmission (education, mass media, and the family) fail, particularly when it comes to marginalized communities within French society looking to constitute and better articulate their identity, subjectivity, and social responsibility. Postcolonial comics that engage with postmemory are unique tools, not only for the representation of national history, but also for the reevaluation of how histories essential to the constitution of a national identity, like the history of the Algerian War, are told.

## NOTES

1. See, for example, Didier Daeninckx's *Meurtres pour mémoire*.
2. A sample image from Neidhardt's comic book can be found on the cover.
3. I analyze this work elsewhere (see Howell 2014).

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Comic book authorship can be attributed to more than one individual. When one individual is listed, he or she is responsible for all aspects of production (scenario, illustrations, and coloration). When two individuals are listed, the first is the scriptwriter, and the second is the illustrator/colorist (the sole exception is *Le combat ordinaire* for which Manu Larcenet is the scriptwriter and illustrator, and Patrice Larcenet is the colorist). When three individuals are listed, the first is the scriptwriter, the second is the illustrator, and the third is the colorist. *Leçons coloniales* constitutes an important exception with three colorists: Albertine Ralenti, Madie Zombi, and Marie Galopin. In the interest of brevity, colorists are not included in parenthetical references made throughout this book; their names have also been excluded from the main text.

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“Author portrait.” Source: Clément Baloup, “Author Portrait.” 2015.

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